# Ranger Rick's nature magazine

Aug./Sept. 1975

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Cover Credits:
Front — Monarch Butterfly by Lynn M. Stone
Back — Mountain Lion by Stewart Cassidy

**Ranger Rick will not publish a September issue.**

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*To use my eyes to see the beauty of all outdoors.*

*To train my mind to learn the importance of nature.*

*To use my hands to help protect our soil, water, woods and wildlife.*

*And, by my good example, to show others how to respect, properly use and enjoy our natural resources.*

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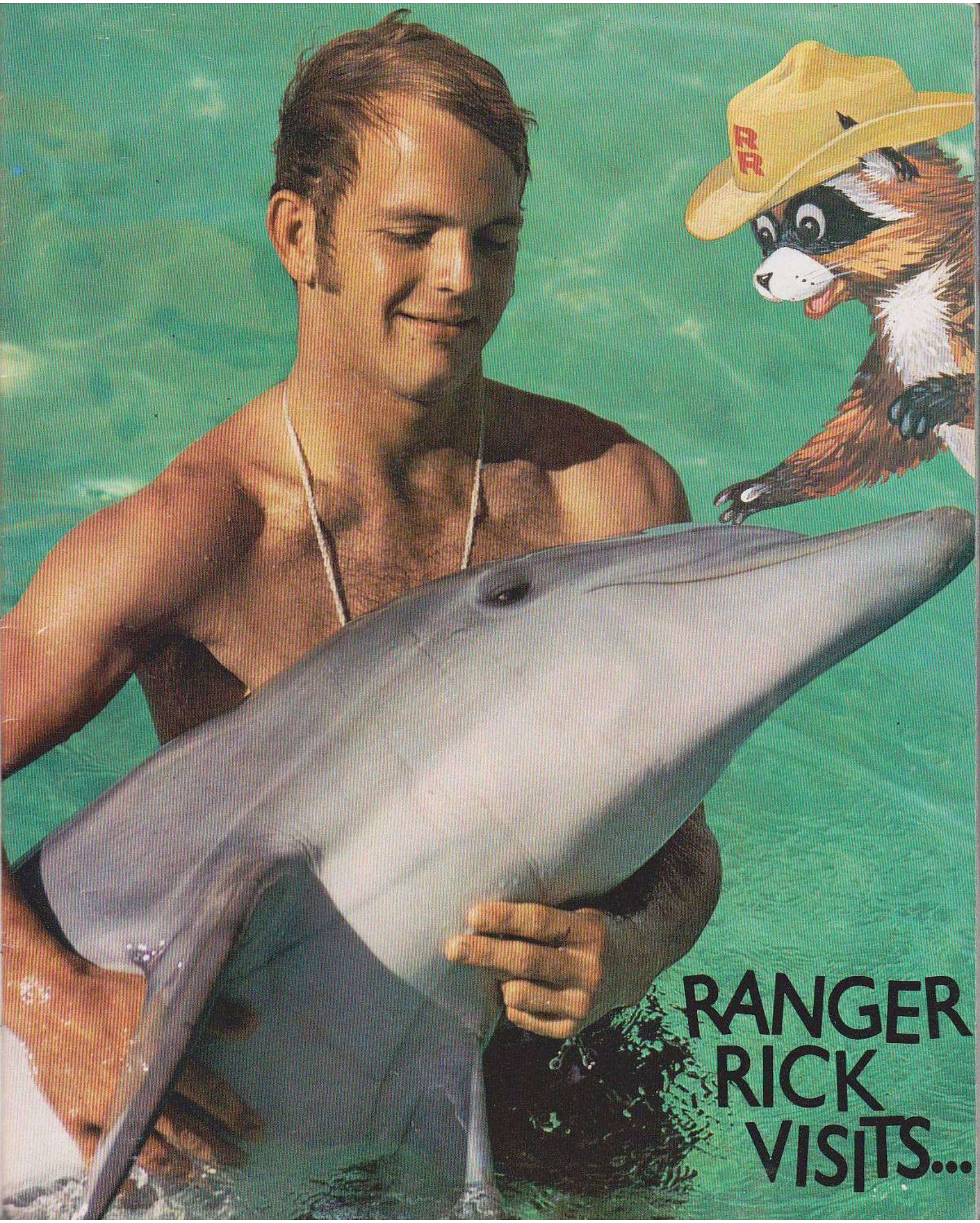
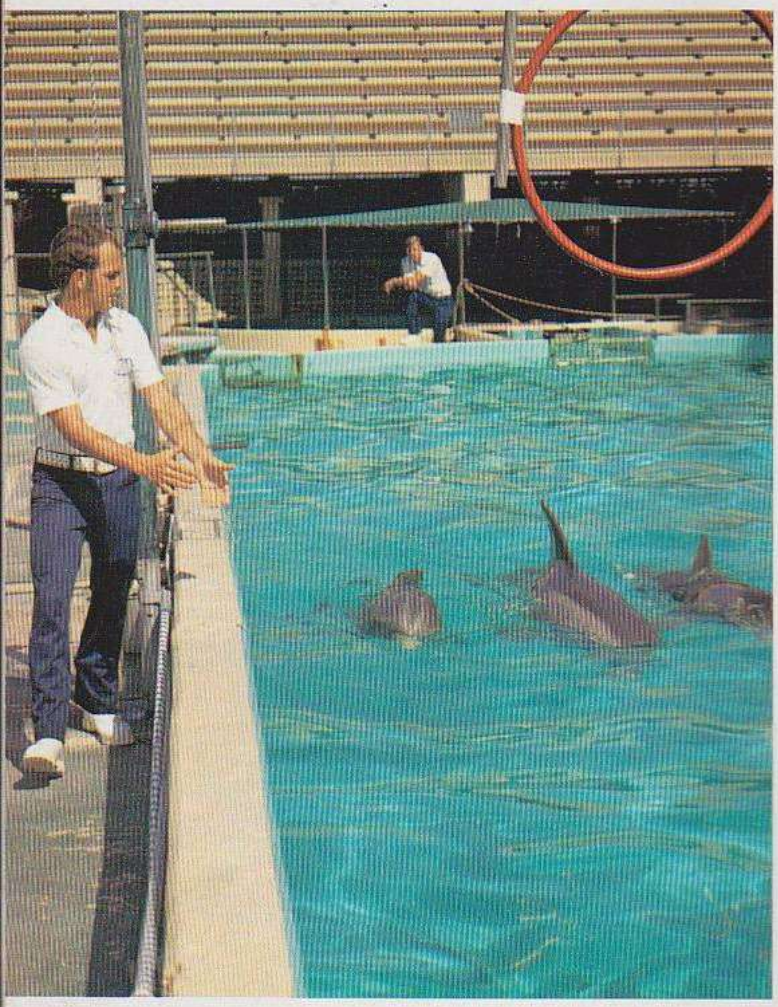

RANGER
RICK
VISITS...

Story and photos by Robert L. Dunne

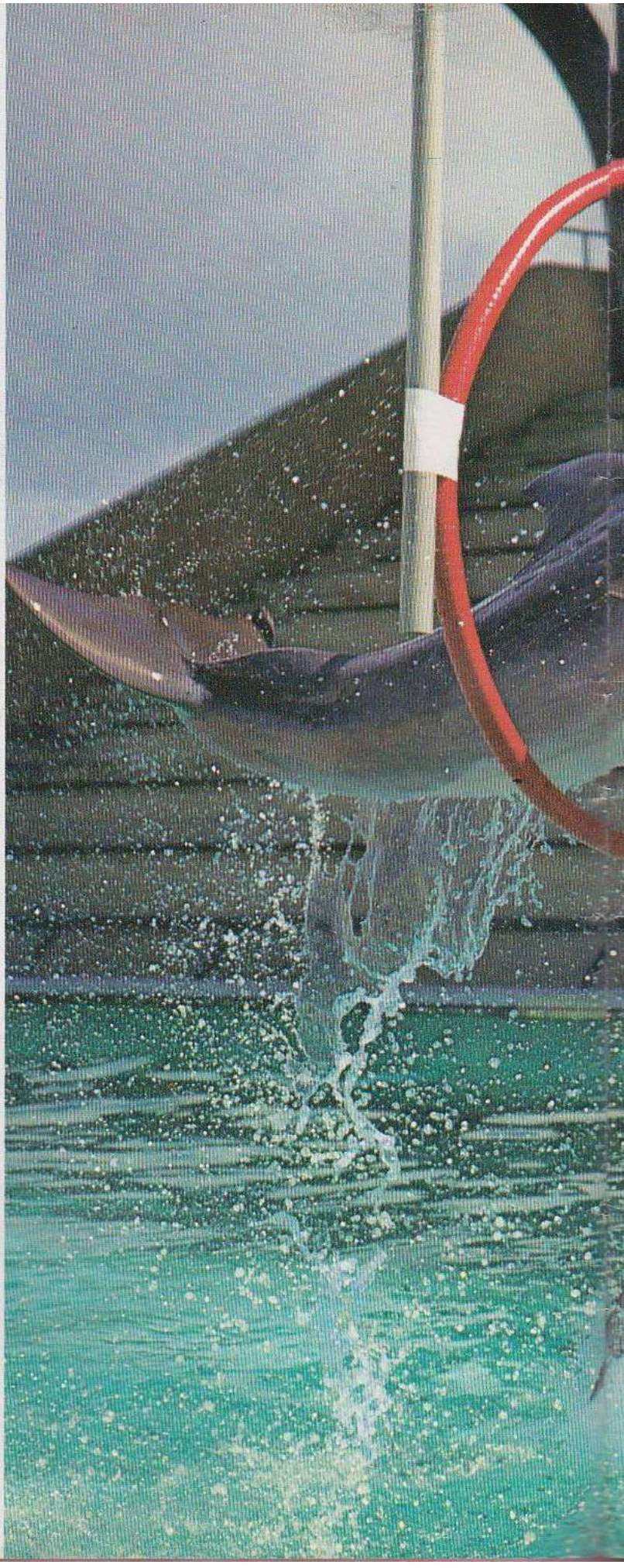
One day last fall Ranger Rick stopped off at Marineland of Florida. There he talked with Gene Black, who works in the big water show and has trained some of the bottle-nosed dolphins that perform in it.

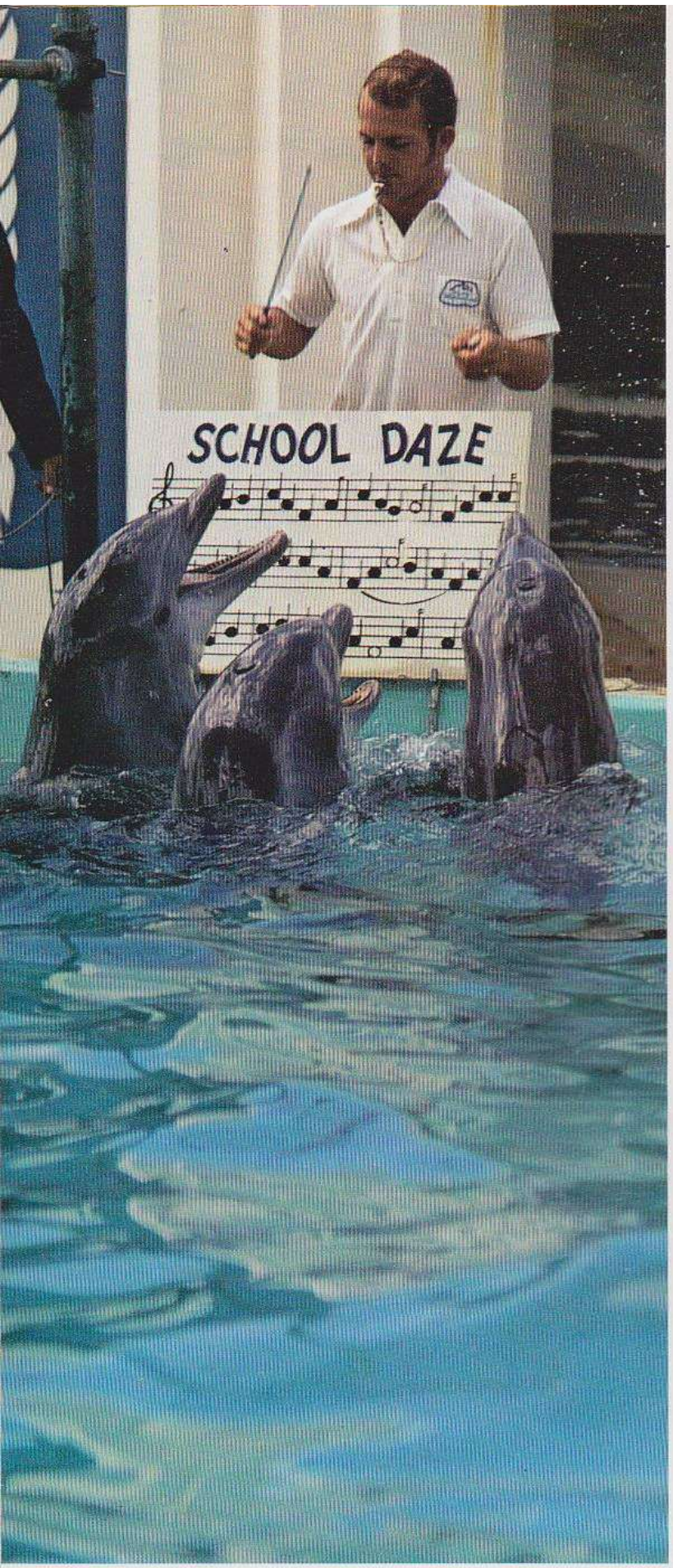
**Rick:** Gosh, Gene, what a great job! Lots of sunshine, right by the ocean and all those friendly dolphins to play with!

**Gene:** Hold on, Rick! It is a lot of fun here, but we have plenty of hard work to do too. Let me tell you how I began working here. *Please turn the page*



# A DOLPHIN SCHOOL






When I was little I used to watch a TV program called "Flipper." It was about some kids who had all sorts of adventures with a dolphin. Oh, how I wanted a dolphin for a friend! After the program went off the air I forgot about my wish—until our family moved to St. Augustine, when I was sixteen.

**Rick:** Is that because St. Augustine is just a few miles from Marineland?

**Gene:** You guessed it, Rick. I first came here with my family. After that I came back on my own many times. I hung around the show and met some of the people working here. When I asked for a summer job I never thought they would take me, but they did!

**Rick:** What did you do—sweep up? Or should I say—mop up?

**Gene:** No, Rick, I was very lucky. I set up the equipment that's used in the show. Then I handled the pen gates. I opened them so the dolphins could come out of their pens and closed them after the dolphins returned. I also cut up fish and put it in food dishes around the big pool and the pens. The trainers use the fish to reward the dolphins when they do one of their tricks.

**Rick:** When did you first go into the water with a dolphin?

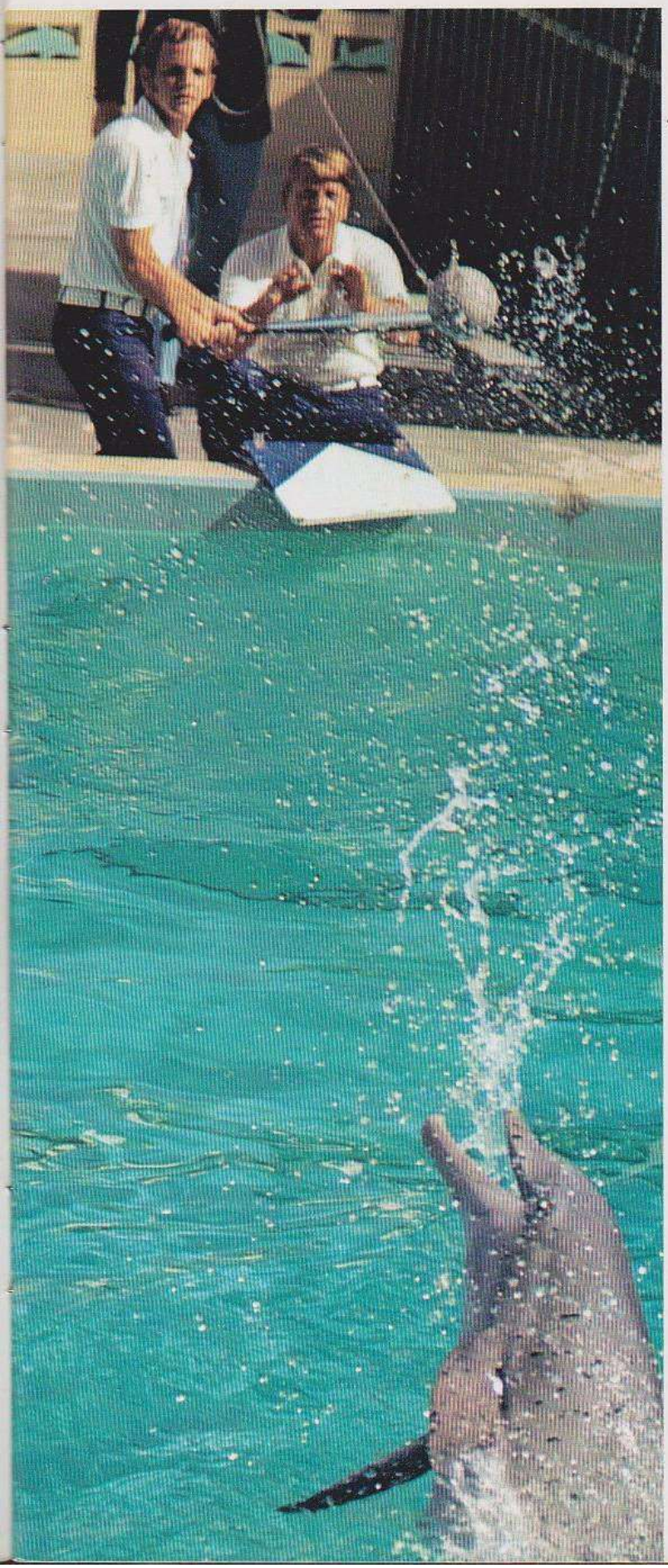
**Gene:** Well, Rick, it happened during a show when it wasn't meant to! I tripped on a hoop and *fell* into the pool! Nellie, one of the dolphins that star in the show, grabbed my hat and took off down to the other end of the pool.

**Rick:** I'll bet they didn't throw you a fish after *that* trick, Gene!

**Gene:** They sure didn't! Everyone except me thought it was very funny—especially Nellie!

**Rick:** That must have been quite a vacation.

**Gene:** It really was. I loved working with the dolphins, so after I graduated from high school I was promoted to apprentice trainer. I watched every training session and asked questions. Everyone on the staff was very nice and tried to help me. I learned an awful lot about bottle-nosed dolphins. In some ways they are very much like people—each one has its own personality.



**Rick:** Do they recognize you?

**Gene:** Oh yes, and the dolphins know the other trainers and scientists too. Scientists have been studying our dolphins for a long time. Here at Marineland they can learn many things about dolphin behavior that would be difficult to see in the ocean.

**Rick:** Do you and the other trainers ever go into the pool and just play with the dolphins?

**Gene:** We sure do! The dolphins love company. Nellie is the most fun. She'll jump over me and nudge me and she loves to race down the pool heading right for me. Just when I think she's going to hit me, she brakes to a stop. She makes quite a wave when she does that!

**Rick:** Hey, that's one of Ollie Otter's tricks too. It all sounds like fun, Gene, but could a dolphin ever really hurt you? Look at all those teeth in Nellie's mouth!

**Gene:** Dolphins don't use their teeth for chewing or tearing, Rick. They hold a fish with their teeth until they can flip the fish around and swallow it headfirst. They could crush a person's arm or leg if they closed their powerful jaws on it; but, as a rule, they won't hurt you because they know you're a friend.

**Rick:** What about a wild dolphin that's just arrived at Marineland? Is it friendly?

**Gene:** Well, you never know. When I went into the water with Flippy, my first pupil, I was scared! Flippy was nervous too. I wanted to let him know I wasn't going to hurt him. So I fed him some fish and talked quietly to him. Flippy was just great! He let me pat him on the head and he calmed right down. He's nice and calm now, Rick. Go on up to the side of the pool and pat him on the head.

**Rick:** Well, maybe later, Gene. You know, Flippy may not take to raccoons. Why not just tell me about Flippy's schooling.

**Gene:** The first step was "gate training." The dolphin must swim out of his home pen and into the big show pool on signal. With Flippy, I slap the side of the pool with my hand. While he was learning this signal I would blow the whistle after he came out and give him some fish. After a while,

*Please turn the page*

he learned that when he heard the whistle he had done well.

**Rick:** What if he didn't do it right?

**Gene:** No whistle and no fish treat.

**Rick:** What was the next thing you taught him?

**Gene:** It was to leap the hurdles. I began by holding a pole under the water and trying to bribe Flippy with a fish to go over it. When he went over I blew the whistle and gave him the fish. Each time I put the hurdle a little higher until finally the pole was above the water. Then Flippy had to leap out of the water to go over it. Sometimes he would miss and really splash me. It took lots of time before he did it perfectly.

**Rick:** It sounds as if you have to have a lot of patience in training dolphins—and a lot of dry towels too.

**Gene:** Towels help, but patience is the big thing. You can't get mad at them and let them see it. When I lose my temper I just walk away for a while. Of course, the dolphins sometimes get mad at the trainers. Then they close their mouths with a loud pop!

**Rick:** After the pole training, was Flippy ready to appear in the show?

**Gene:** No, Rick, he still had to learn to jump through a hoop and to race the length of the pool. After he could do those things I brought another dolphin, Splash, out to work with him. Flippy went through the whole routine with Splash. Next I brought Blackie out and Flippy went through it with both of them. Then one afternoon we put Flippy in the show. It had taken eight months to train him for that big moment. It was exciting!

When you work with an intelligent animal like Flippy and the day comes for him to enter the show you get a feeling of accomplishment. I felt like a proud parent on graduation day. And I slipped him a dozen extra fish after the show! **Uh-oh, hold onto your hat, Rick!**

**Rick: Too late. Nellie's got it and there she goes!!**

*The End*

# Do you know me

by Rae Dubois

My ancestors were among the earliest dwellers of the West. My home is the yellow grassland, but I would also be at home in the desert or mountains. I share the grassland with coyotes and antelope, the lanky jack rabbit and the speckled, darting roadrunner. All know me and most of them fear me, though I am neither large nor powerful. Indeed, I am shy and seldom seen. I move about mostly at night or in the cooler hours of the day.

No one but the tiny burrowing owl watches me now. Softly, silently, slowly I crawl from my sheltered rock ledge where I spent the day sleeping and watching, watching and waiting, protected from the sun's heat. The twilight moon reveals that I am handsome—graceful and slender, gold and amber, olive and black. Moonlight shines upon my yellow eyes, which never close. My tail, with a ragged, broken tip will tell you that I am old. My skin is scaly, yet smooth.

Only yesterday, moving slowly between two tightly wedged rocks, I peeled away an old, outer layer of skin which had become tight and dull in color. Afterward it was an inside-out replica of me, even to the tiny, transparent eye shields. By now it has become ragged and dry. It rustles like tissue paper in the wind.

A fox on the trail of a cottontail rabbit nearly treads on me, and I coil in alarm, frantically sounding my warning, "Stay back! Stay back!" Instantly the fox jumps away, her fur bristling in nervous surprise. *Please turn the page*

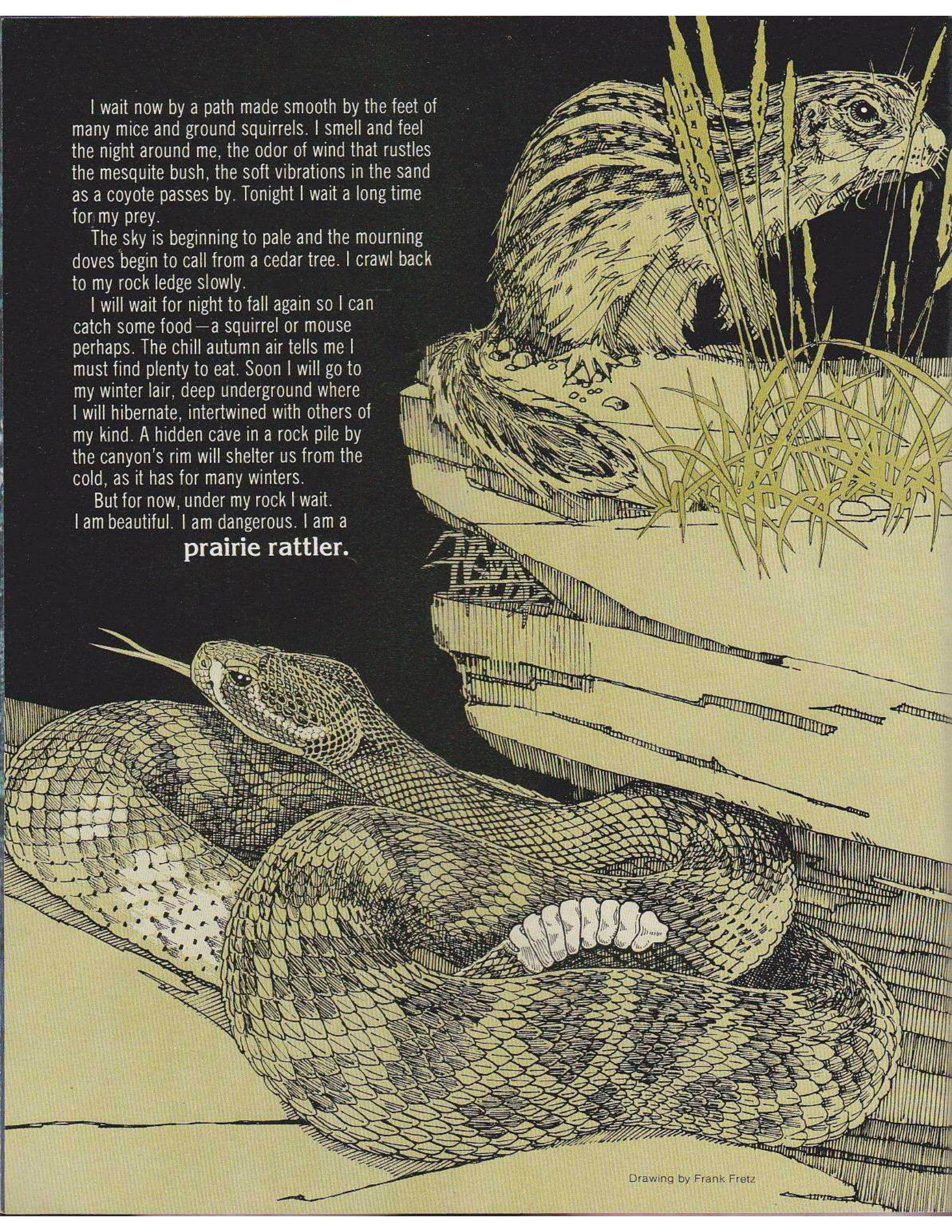
I wait now by a path made smooth by the feet of many mice and ground squirrels. I smell and feel the night around me, the odor of wind that rustles the mesquite bush, the soft vibrations in the sand as a coyote passes by. Tonight I wait a long time for my prey.

The sky is beginning to pale and the mourning doves begin to call from a cedar tree. I crawl back to my rock ledge slowly.

I will wait for night to fall again so I can catch some food—a squirrel or mouse perhaps. The chill autumn air tells me I must find plenty to eat. Soon I will go to my winter lair, deep underground where I will hibernate, intertwined with others of my kind. A hidden cave in a rock pile by the canyon's rim will shelter us from the cold, as it has for many winters.

But for now, under my rock I wait. I am beautiful. I am dangerous. I am a

**prairie rattler.**



Drawing by Frank Fretz

**Dear Wise Old Owl,**
**How big are black widow spiders? Why are they called widows?** Hillary Stevenson, Age 11, Norfolk, Virginia

The female black widow has a round, fat, shiny black body about as big as a thumbtack. Males are only about half as big as females. After mating, the female usually kills and eats the male. Then she is a widow—and that's how the black widow got her name!

**How does a rattlesnake's rattle make noise?**
Fred James, Age 11, Auburn, New York

A rattlesnake's rattle is built like a stack of tiny teacups. Each cup is attached to the next, and each has three small bumps on it. When the snake shakes its tail (about 50 times each second!) the bumps of one cup tap against those on the inside of the next cup. There is so much tapping going on that it sounds like a *hisssss* rather than a rattle.

Sometimes a rattlesnake rattles, and sometimes it doesn't. Rattlesnakes, like most animals, don't like to make trouble! They would rather hide or slip away than challenge a dangerous enemy such as a human.

But if you happen to surprise or corner a rattlesnake, it will probably rattle with all its might. It rattles for the same reason a dog growls, a gander goose hisses and a bull stomps the ground. It is saying *stay back!*

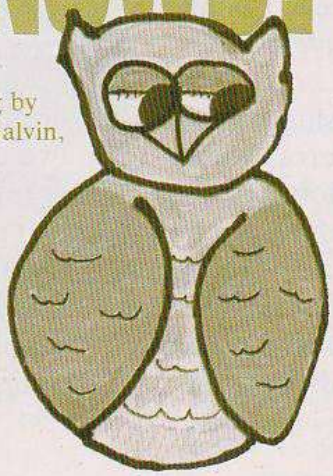
Sometimes, though, a rattlesnake can be so surprised or frightened that it doesn't give a warning—it just strikes!

**You said cuttlefish are boneless (*R.R.*, March 1975), but my parakeet has a cuttlebone in her cage. Isn't this a bone?** Lisel Moyer, New York

Cuttlefish don't have bones like fish and snakes do. That "bone" your parakeet is pecking at is really a shell—but the shell grows *inside* the cuttlefish's body, instead of outside like it does on a snail.

The shell has many tiny holes that were once filled with gases and helped the cuttlefish float.

# WHO-O-O KNOWS?



Drawing by Kevin Galvin, Age 9

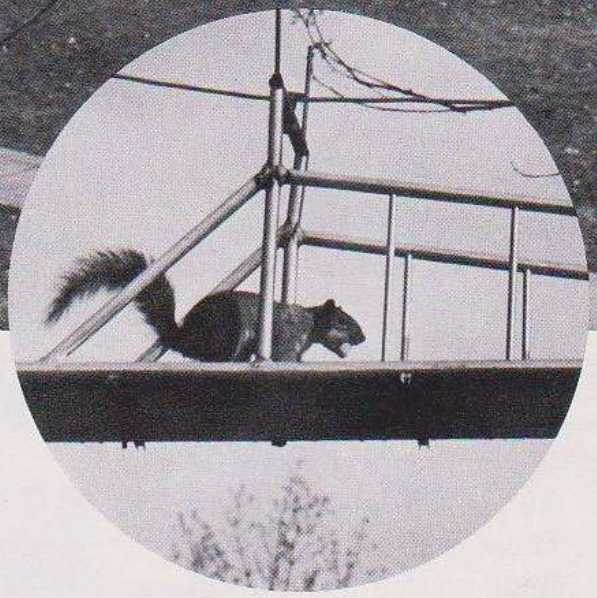
**Is there such a thing as a laughing hyena?**
Teresa Pontyer, Kersey, Pennsylvania

Yes, but it really doesn't laugh the way you do when you hear a silly joke. Spotted hyenas have a strange howl that sounds like crazy human laughter. The howling is loudest and craziest when the hyenas are hunting or eating.

**Dear Wise Old Owl,**
**When the drapes aren't drawn, birds always hit our picture window. What can we do so that birds won't fly into our window and get hurt?**
Jon T. Bone, Age 9

Many Rangers have asked Wise Old Owl what to do about this problem. The birds see woods and fields reflected in large glass windows. This fools them into flying smack up against the glass. Sometimes they kill themselves. Keeping the drapes closed will cut down on the reflection. Or you can try

**Ranger Rick's Hawk Trick:** Paste a dark paper outline or silhouette of a life-size flying hawk on the window. (Most bird field guides show you what flying hawks look like, so use one as a guide for your outline.) Hawks are natural enemies of small birds, and your paper hawk will fool the birds into staying away from the window.



Photos courtesy The Longview Daily News

# Happy Bee

**PEOPLE TO THE RESCUE!** Some people claim that they have squirrel trouble, especially if squirrels raid their bird feeders or chew their way into the attic. But if you could ask the squirrels, I think they would claim that they have *people* trouble (sometimes).

A few years ago in Longview, Washington, the squirrels had just that. They had to cross a busy street to get to and from their tree homes. People in cars kept zipping by without watching out for the squirrels. Many of the little animals were killed.

So Amos Peters and his construction engineers (who are thoughtful people) decided to do something about it. But what? They couldn't get the trees to branch out to make a leafy bridge across the street, and they couldn't put a traffic cop on Squirrel Patrol!

*Hey!* they thought, *why not build them a real bridge!* And that's just what they did.

As you can see by the picture, it is a handsome, professional job. The "roadway" is a fire hose with two cables running through it. The sides are pieces of tubing.

It didn't take the squirrels long to figure out what the bridge was for. Now they zip back and forth on their nutty errands in safety . . . all because some people realized that squirrels have problems too (sometimes).

*The End*

070971

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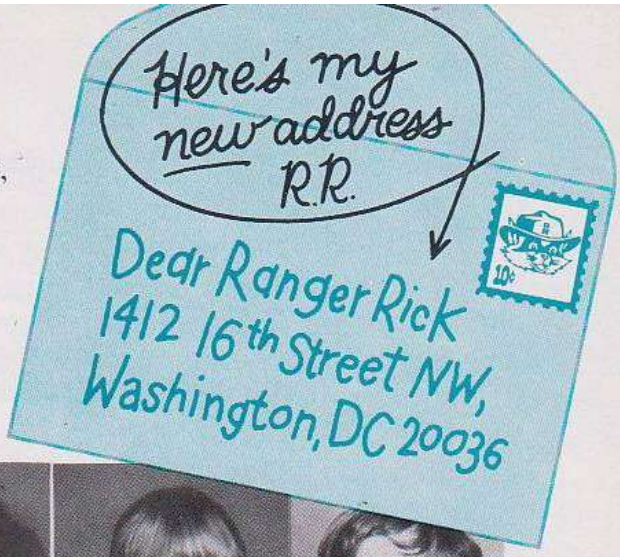
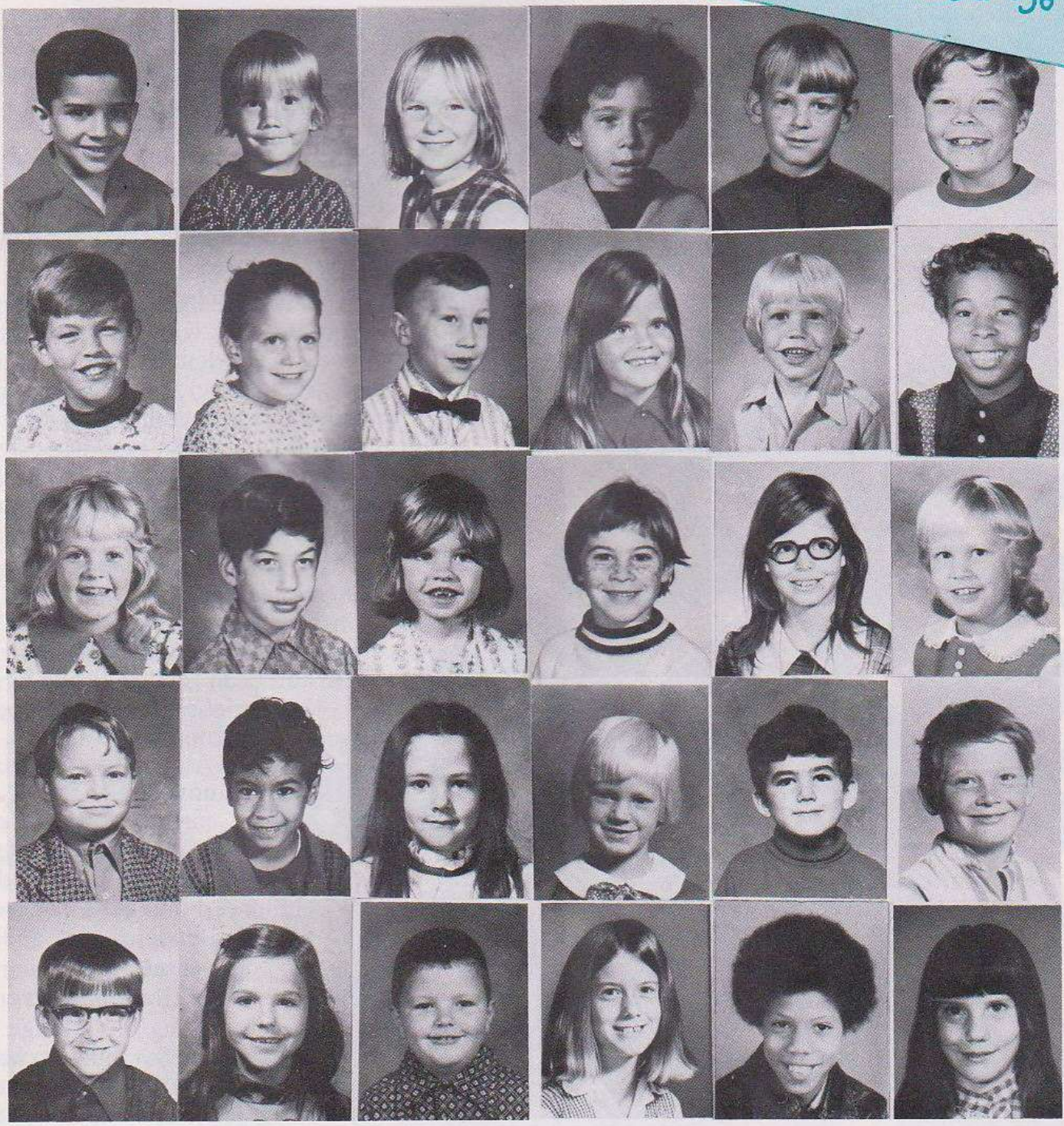
Hi, Rangers, While you're enjoying a vacation this summer, I'm going to be busy moving to a new den.
My editor friends who help me with the magazine are also moving their offices to the National Wildlife Federation Headquarters in Washington, D.C. You will find their new address on page 2, but when you write to me use →
Ranger Rick



by Tom Monser

# THE BRISTLY BADGER

It was spring. The light of a full moon softened the night shadows. Across the grassy plain, a pigeon-toed animal waddled away from a prairie dog town. She was as big as a large, chunky raccoon—but she was silvery gray with long claws and a pointy nose. A long white stripe ran from the tip of her nose back to her shoulders. She was a badger.

Held firmly in her jaws was a fat, limp prairie dog that swayed slightly as she hurried back to her babies. She had been gone from them for over three hours, and they were hungry.

At four weeks old, her three "pups" had never left their grass-lined, underground home. The only world they knew was their dark den, their mother's milk and her body warmth.

The babies whimpered eagerly as she entered the burrow. Dropping the dead prairie dog, she stretched out on her side. Quickly the pups nuzzled against her, searching for her nipples. While they sucked the warm milk, she managed to eat part of the prairie dog. Later she cleaned her babies with her tongue. Then she slept while they continued to nurse.

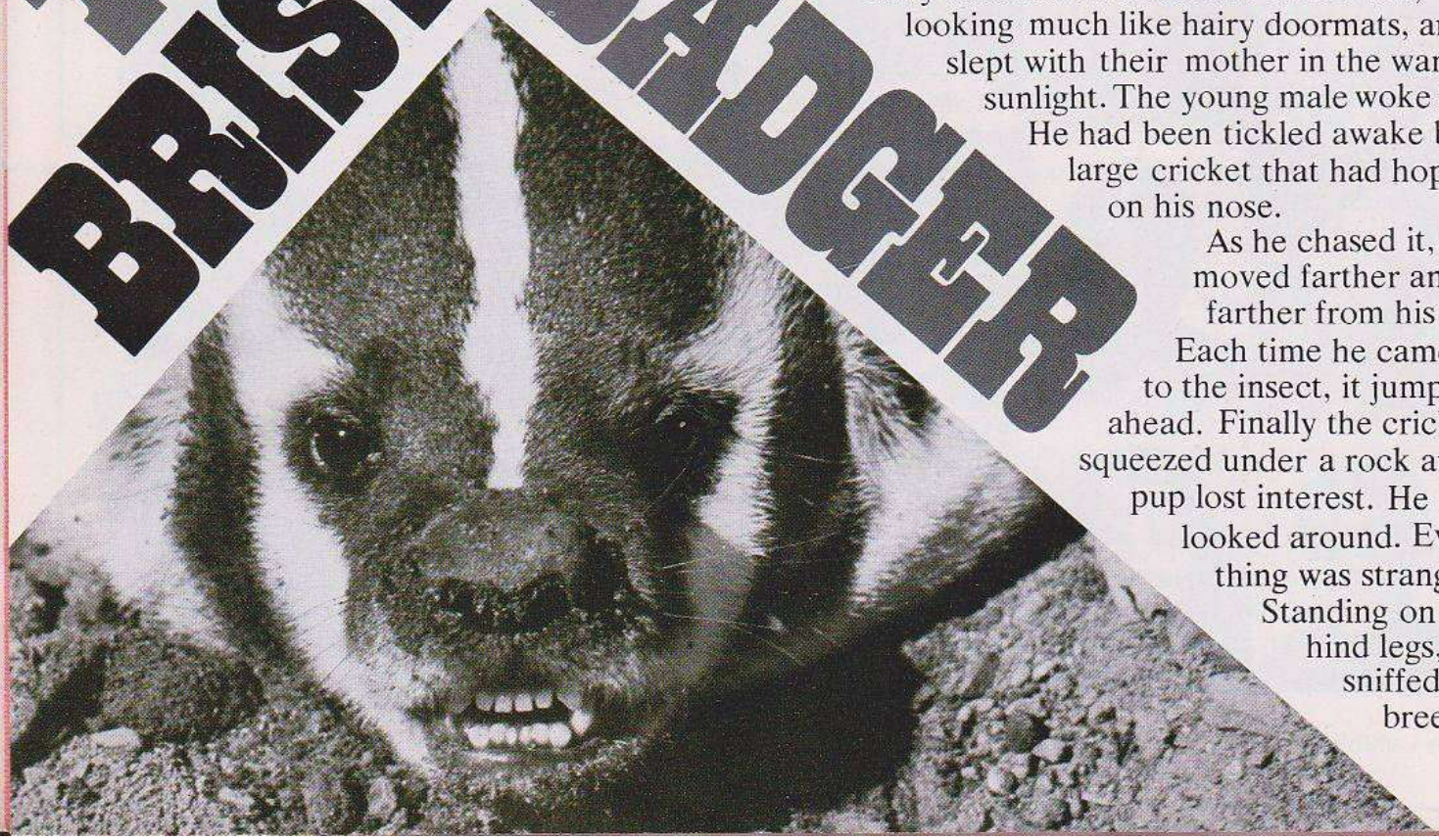
By the month of June the young badgers were large enough to play outside the den. Their favorite game was "king of the hill." It was a simple game and they played it often. The largest of the three, a male, crawled up on a flat rock. The female pups tried to push him off. They rolled, tugged, clawed and shoved, but couldn't budge him.

While the pups played, mother badger was on guard, protecting her young from harm. She sniffed the air and watched for predators, and then she too joined in the game.

Snorting and pretending to be fierce, she ran up to the young male. She gently clutched the loose skin of his neck with her teeth and carried him back to the den. He squirmed like a fish on a line, trying to get loose. She dropped him. He bounded away playfully. She chased her squirming pup and caught him. Once again he struggled free and ran back to try to push his two sisters from the rock they had climbed.

Finally all three pups grew tired of the game. They stretched out in front of the den, looking much like hairy doormats, and slept with their mother in the warm sunlight. The young male woke first. He had been tickled awake by a large cricket that had hopped on his nose.

As he chased it, he moved farther and farther from his den. Each time he came close to the insect, it jumped ahead. Finally the cricket squeezed under a rock and the pup lost interest. He looked around. Everything was strange. Standing on his hind legs, he sniffed the breeze.



Photos by Leonard Lee Rue IV, Alvin E. Staffan

**When the hungry eagle attacked, the little badger was in trouble! He ran to hide—but could he dig a hole fast enough to escape?**

He was lost. To make matters worse, he crawled away—in the wrong direction.

A golden eagle circling in the sky saw the badger pup moving his flat body slowly along the ground. Dropping rapidly, the hungry bird swooped directly over its target. But the eagle missed! Its sharp talons clutched only a shred of fur from the young badger's back.

The eagle landed near the badger and stared with large, sparkling eyes. Then the eagle spread its wings and hopped toward the frightened pup. But the young badger was not ready to give up. Grunting and snorting and baring his sharp teeth, the badger suddenly "blew up"! His long, soft, gray hair bristled and stuck out until he looked almost twice as big as he really was! Then he ran under the branches of a fallen tree and began to dig as fast as he could with his strong front claws. As he dug, dirt flew back into the eagle's eyes. In a few minutes, the badger was safely underground! The eagle flew off.

Sometime later he peeked from his hiding place and looked in all directions. Which way should he go? He sniffed the air. Suddenly the musky odor of another badger reached him. Could this be his mother? It was!

The pup was so glad to see his mother that he ran to meet her, slamming his head into her chest. The mother badger licked his face gently and led him back home. It would be many months before he strayed far from the den again.

When autumn arrived the young male and two females were fully grown. Their mother had taught them how to catch snakes and squirrels and how to dig for mice and gophers. Now it was time for the family to separate.

The young badgers left their mother to make underground homes of their own in different parts of the prairie. Using their sharp claws and powerful front feet, each dug a tunnel into the ground. They gathered grass and moss and each made a soft bed at the end of its tunnel. The dens would be safe, warm places to sleep during the winter. *The End*

# Ollie Otter's

## Be a Birdwatcher by Vivian Gouled

It's fun to be a birdwatcher! There are 15 birds for you to find here. You may look for them by reading frontward, backward, up, down and sideways. Draw a circle around each one you find, and check the name off the list below.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| W | W | T | H | R | U | S | H |
| R | O | B | I | N | N | O | C |
| E | O | L | M | I | C | W | H |
| N | D | U | P | N | T | O | I |
| O | P | E | U | W | O | R | C |
| E | E | J | Q | W | W | R | K |
| G | C | A | L | D | H | A | A |
| I | K | Y | G | U | E | P | D |
| P | E | A | Z | L | E | S | E |
| O | R | I | O | L | E | R | E |

BLUE JAY, ORIOLE, SPARROW, CHICKADEE, OWL, THRUSH, CROW, PIGEON, TOWHEE, EAGLE, ROBIN, WOODPECKER, JUNCO, SNIPE, WREN.

## Birds in Hiding by Eleanor P. Anderson

Hidden in the sentences below are names of birds. The letters are in the right order, but you may find them in more than one word. One is circled for you.

1. Please hand me the wrench.
2. Did you hear that rooster crow?
3. Nancy can warble right at the top of the scale.
4. Ruth rushed to the store.
5. Do you think they will rob in the night?
6. Put the card in all the way.
7. Jack got rave notices for his trumpet solo.
8. Put the bowl in the cupboard.

**It's neat to know the names of birds and be able to recognize different kinds. Sometimes the color of their feathers is a good clue to their names. See if you can match up the birds on the next five pages with the names listed below. Put the number from each picture in the box next to the name you think is the right one.**

Blue Jay ☐

Brown Thrasher ☐

Black and White Warbler ☐

Rose-Breasted Grosbeak ☐

Black-Throated Blue Warbler ☐

Yellow-Breasted Chat ☐

Scarlet Tanager ☐



ANSWERS ON PAGE 35.

Photos by John Tveten

# Bird Games

1

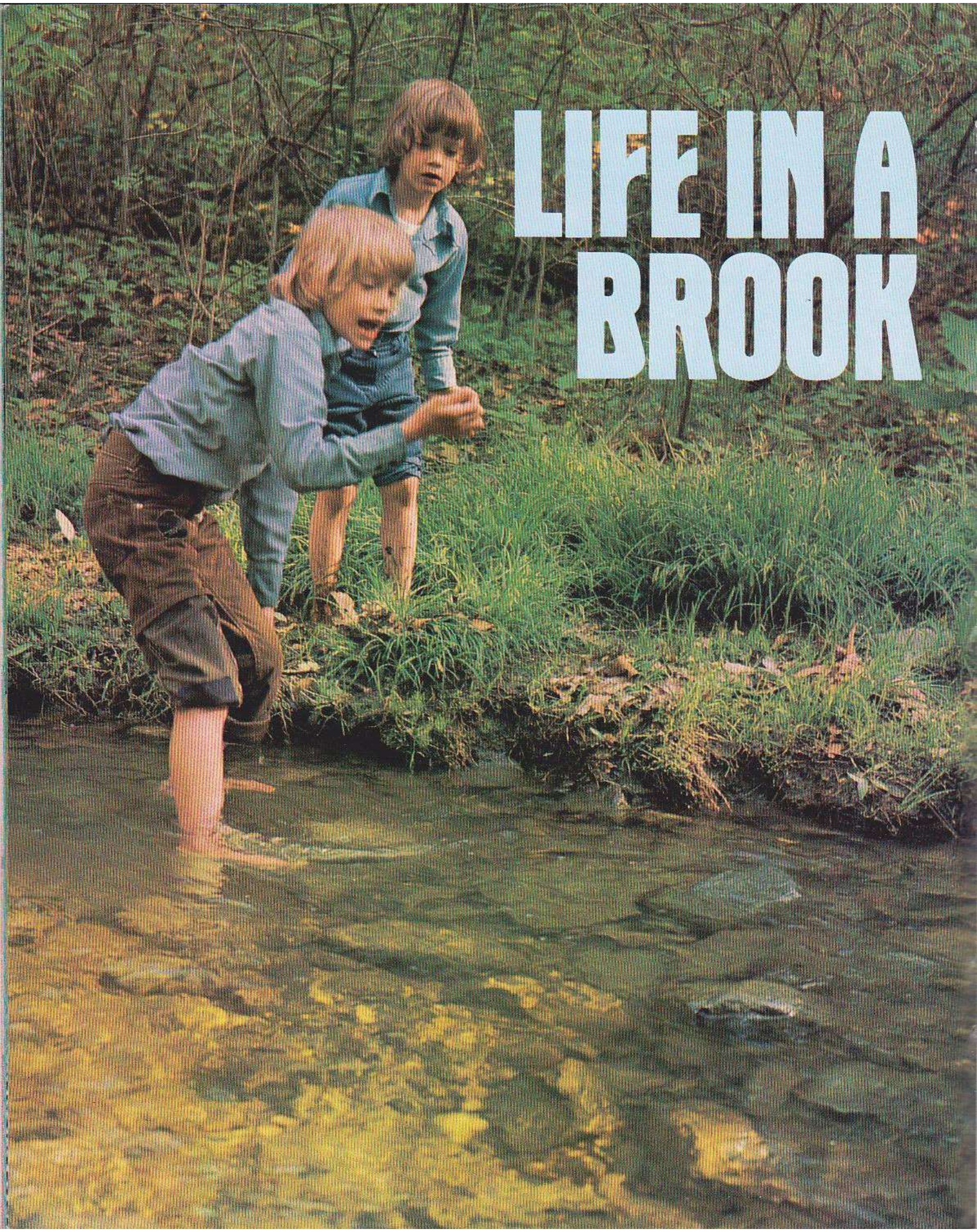
2
3

4

5

6

# 7


LIFE IN A
BROOK

by Laurence Pringle

Running water can be lots of fun. Perhaps you have waded in a brook or creek. You may have made a dam of stones, or sent little boats on dangerous journeys over tiny rapids and waterfalls.

A brook is much more than a great place to play—it is a fascinating place to explore. It is home for dozens of different kinds of plants and animals.

You can see many animals along the edge of a brook! Dragonflies and damselflies fly by, catching smaller insects in the air. Leopard frogs lurk in the grass. Salamanders live in a dark, moist world under rocks. Spiders spin webs and catch their share of the insects.

At night a raccoon prowls along the shore. It feels underwater for crayfish. In the morning you may find its tracks.

If you look under the water, you will discover why raccoons and other animals visit the brook. Thousands of living things live there. You can find many creatures clinging to rocks that lie on the stream bottom. Many live underneath these rocks too.

You will not see some of the brook's most important life—the microscopic bacteria and fungi. They break down (decay) dead material in the brook, such as "skins" shed by insects and crayfish and the bodies of animals and plants. They also break down material that falls or washes into the stream, such as the leaves you see floating downstream in the fall.

This decayed material becomes food for the creatures of the brook and fertilizer for the plants. The energy from this food passes through a chain of living things as one eats another. Tiny creatures are eaten by insects and minnows. Sooner or later the raccoons, spiders and mink along the stream's edge become part of this food chain.

As you look out over a brook, you will see pools and rapids, deep places and shallow areas. Many kinds of stream animals live in swift currents and catch bits of food from the water that flows past. They cannot live in quiet pools or slow-flowing streams. Other animals live only in quiet pools. They would die if they were put in swift water.

Visit a brook near your home to find out what kinds of animals live there. The drawings on the next few pages show some of the animals you might find in a fast-flowing brook which has some quiet pools.

*(please turn to page 26)*

You can find these creatures in the drawings on the next two pages.

1. leopard frog
2. dragonfly
3. raccoon
4. water strider
5. fishing spider
6. mayfly nymph
7. redfin shiner
8. smallmouth bass
9. blacknose dace
10. crayfish
11. stonefly nymph
12. two-lined salamander
13. dragonfly nymph
14. water pennies
15. blackfly larvae
16. hellgrammite
17. net-spinning caddisfly larva
18. case-building caddisfly larva
19. sculpin

Photo by Laurence Pringle

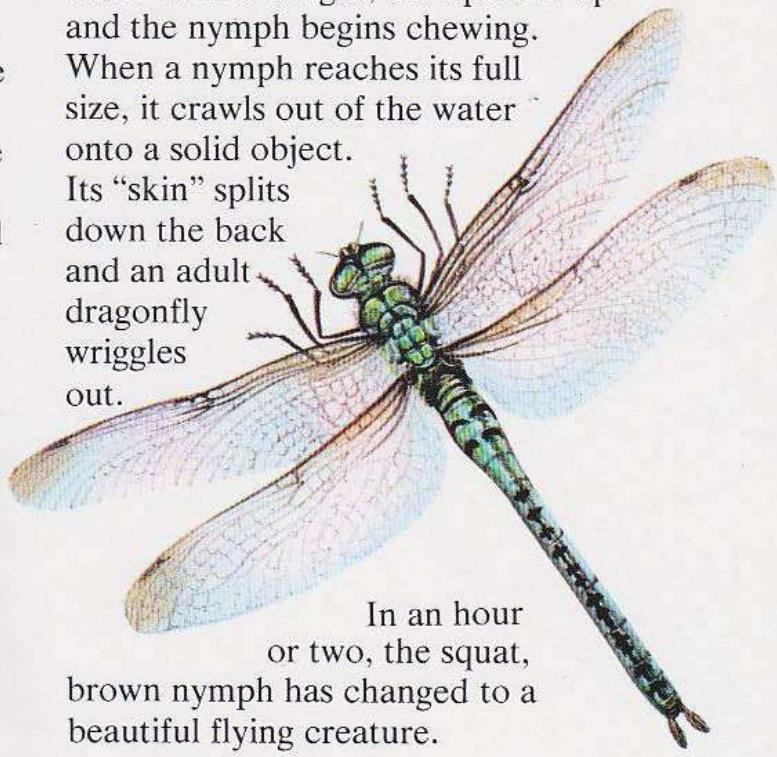
**Blackfly.** Female blackflies bite people, deer and other mammals because they need blood in order for their eggs to develop. The eggs are laid on rocks and logs in swift water. When the young, or larvae, hatch from the eggs they move to surfaces that are swept by the fastest current. Sometimes there are so many that their bodies look like a mat of black moss on rocks. The larvae cling to the rocks and catch tiny bits of food from the water with two fanlike organs on their heads. Blackfly larvae are a favorite food of young trout and many other fish.

**Two-Lined Salamander.** Look in shallow water or under stones at the edge of a stream for these salamanders. They wriggle away quickly and are hard to catch. In the spring the females lay eggs in sheltered places under rocks or logs in fast-flowing water. The young that hatch from the eggs breathe through gills which are located in back of their heads.

**Crayfish.** Looking like tiny lobsters, crayfish roam the stream bottom searching for plant and animal food, either dead or alive. Crayfish themselves are eaten by mink, raccoons, otters, fish and many other animals. The "dead" crayfish you see on the stream bottom are probably outer skeletons shed by crayfish as they grew new, larger skeletons.

**Fishing Spider.** *Dolomedes* (dole-ah-MEED-eez), the fishing spider, lives along the shore. Sometimes it runs over the surface and catches insects for food. Sometimes it dives underwater after insects and small fish. Air bubbles are trapped in the spider's body hairs. The spider is able to stay underwater for a half hour or more because of oxygen in the bubbles.

**Dragonfly.** Adult dragonflies hunt insects in the air. Young dragonflies, or *nymphs,* do the same underwater. The nymphs have a double-hinged lower "lip" that whips out and grabs insects or other small animals. Once food is caught, the lip folds up and the nymph begins chewing. When a nymph reaches its full size, it crawls out of the water onto a solid object. Its "skin" splits down the back and an adult dragonfly wriggles out.



In an hour or two, the squat, brown nymph has changed to a beautiful flying creature.

**Water Strider.** These insects usually stay away from rapids. A strider walks across the water surface on its six legs, which are spread far apart. The tips of its legs are fringed with waxy "hairs." These hairs help keep the legs from breaking through the surface of the water. Water striders hunt small insects above and just below the surface, grabbing them with their short, front legs.

**Stonefly.** Stonefly nymphs feed mainly on algae and dead leaves, though some kinds eat other animals. The nymphs are food for minnows, trout and young dragonflies. They cling to rocks in a very swift current. They are

found mostly in cold northern streams. At times the adults will come out of the water and mate while snow and ice are still along the stream.

**Blacknose Dace.** This minnow is one of the most common kinds east of the Rocky Mountains, but it is only one of 200 species of minnows in North America. Blacknose dace grow to be about 7.5 centimeters (about 3 inches) long. They eat insects and other small animals and are eaten by larger fish and birds.

**Common Shiner.** The silvery sides and bellies of these fish flash in the waters of many kinds of brooks. They are sometimes called *redfins.* Male shiners make "nests" in shallow rapids by moving stones about. Several females lay their eggs in each nest, which is then guarded by a male until the eggs hatch.

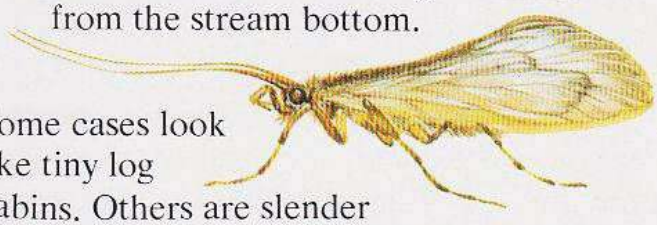
**Sculpin.** These bottom-dwelling fish usually hide under rocks during the daytime. They also lay their eggs under stones. Sculpins feed on the bottom and sometimes eat the eggs of other fish. Their large front fins help them brace themselves against the current.

**Hellgrammite.** These fierce-looking larvae are the young of insects called dobsonflies. Female dobsonflies lay their eggs on plants, bridges and other objects overhanging a stream. When the eggs hatch the larvae drop into the water. They spend two or three years underwater. Hellgrammites have strong biting jaws and hunt insects and other small animals on the bottom and under stones.

**Mayfly.** There are about 500 kinds of mayflies in North America. Some of the nymphs burrow in sand and gravel. Many kinds live under stones in swift water. Most mayfly nymphs feed on algae that grow on rocks. The nymphs are an important source of food for many underwater animals. All through spring and summer, but especially in May, nymphs rise to the surface. The backs of their "skins" split open and winged mayflies squirm out and fly into the air.

**Water Penny.** These thin, round beetle larvae look like small copper coins stuck to the undersides of stones. They cling to the stones with their legs and with spines along the edge of their "shells." The larvae eat algae that grow on the rocks. They develop into land-dwelling beetles. The female beetles enter the water only to lay eggs.

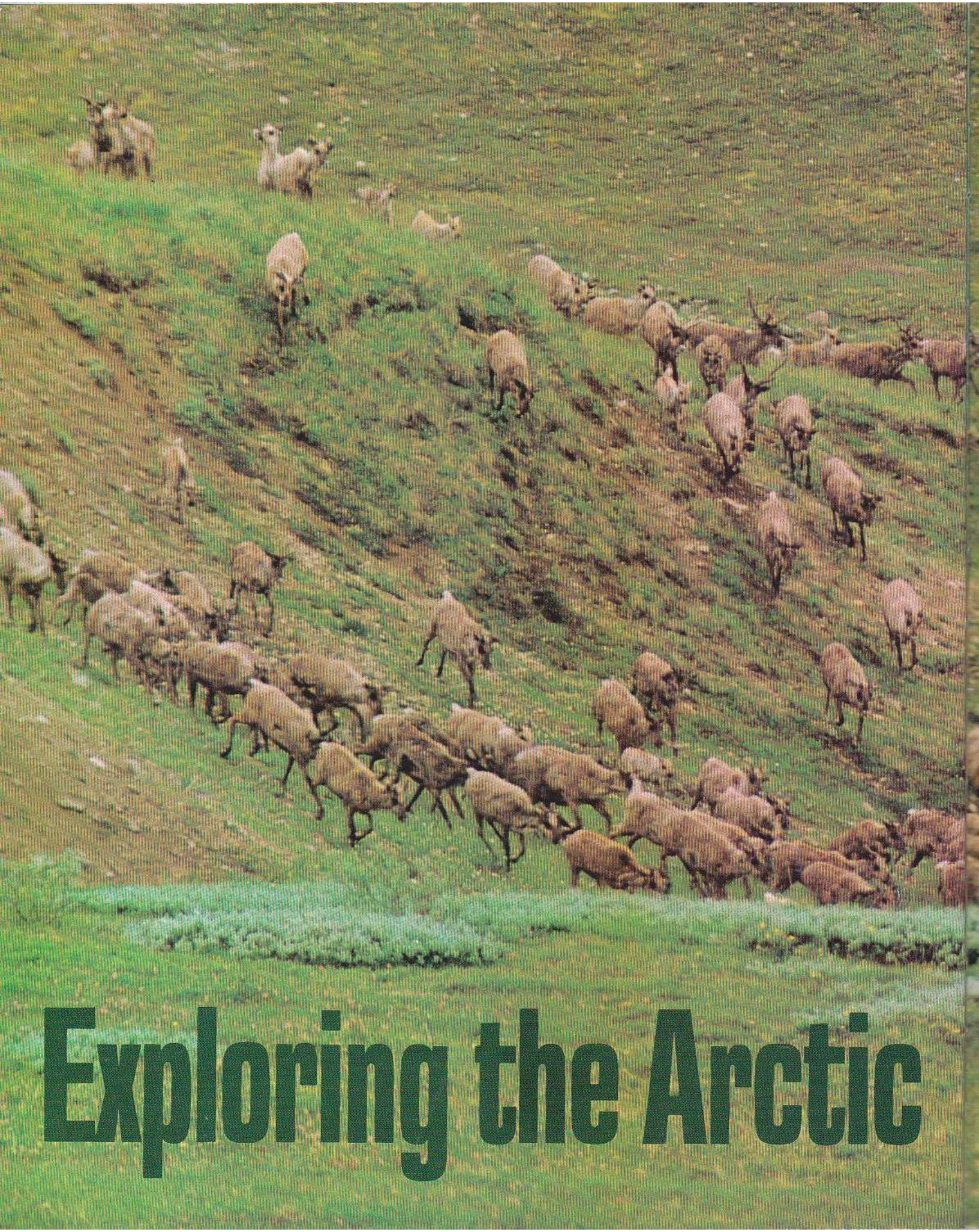
**Caddisfly.** Most caddisfly larvae make protective cases of pebbles, sand grains, plant stems and other building materials from the stream bottom.



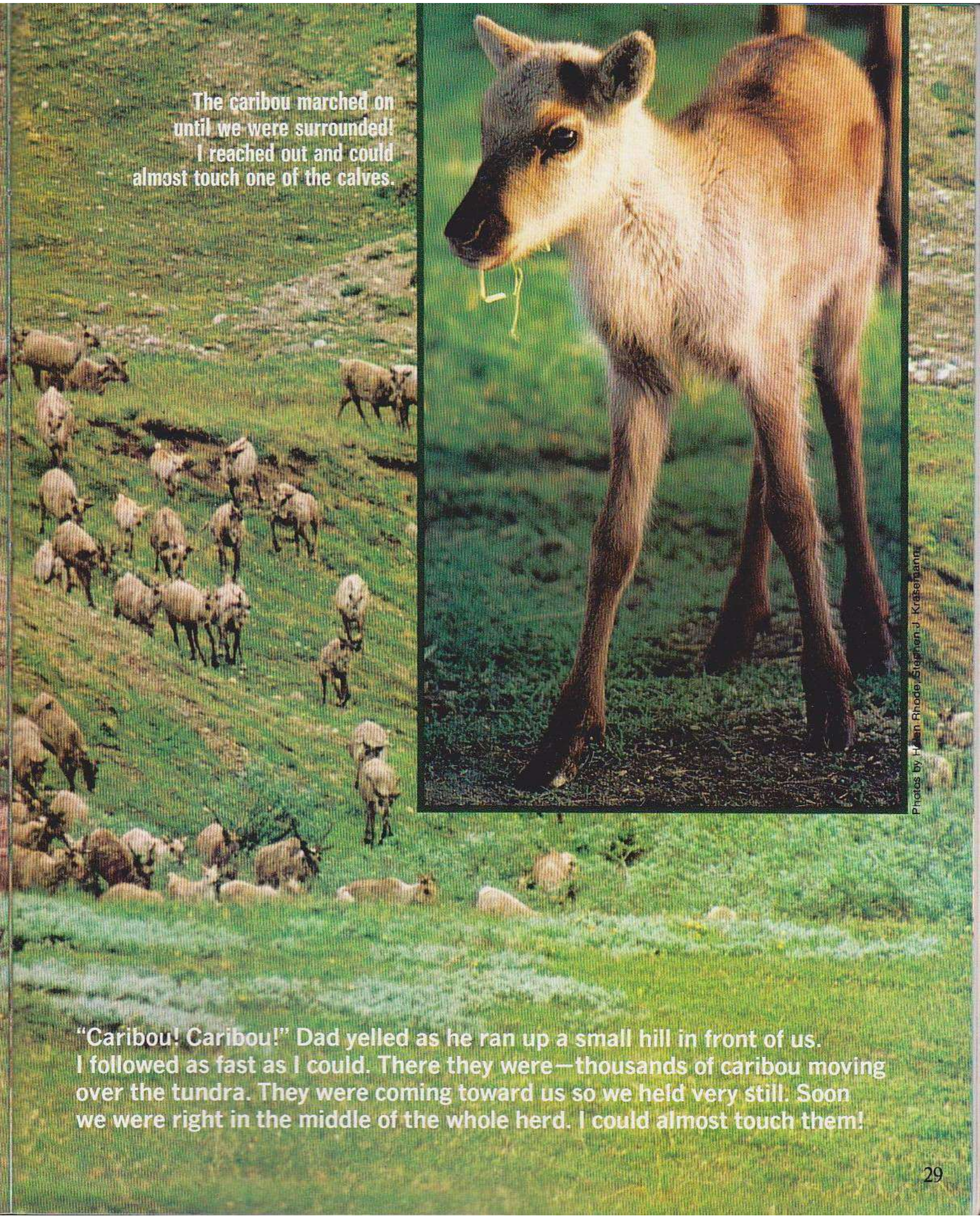
Some cases look like tiny log cabins. Others are slender cones, long tubes or curved cylinders. The case-builders eat mostly plants. They graze on algae and mosses on stones, or catch food particles carried to them by the current.

Some caddisfly larvae spin nets of silk between stones. These larvae eat whatever tiny plants and animals the current brings to their net. *The End*

Drawings by John Barber



# Exploring the Arctic


The caribou marched on until we were surrounded! I reached out and could almost touch one of the calves.
Photos by Hellan Rhode Sigstrom J. Kratsemann

"Caribou! Caribou!" Dad yelled as he ran up a small hill in front of us. I followed as fast as I could. There they were—thousands of caribou moving over the tundra. They were coming toward us so we held very still. Soon we were right in the middle of the whole herd. I could almost touch them!

by Eric Troyer, Age 11

Dad and I had left our home in Anchorage, Alaska, on July 1, and had flown north to the Arctic. We were now camped on the coast of the Arctic Ocean at the top of the world. Dad is a biologist with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He asked me to help him explore the Arctic Coast by kayak and to study the wildlife. He said we would see lots of caribou, but now I couldn't believe my eyes. Caribou were everywhere!

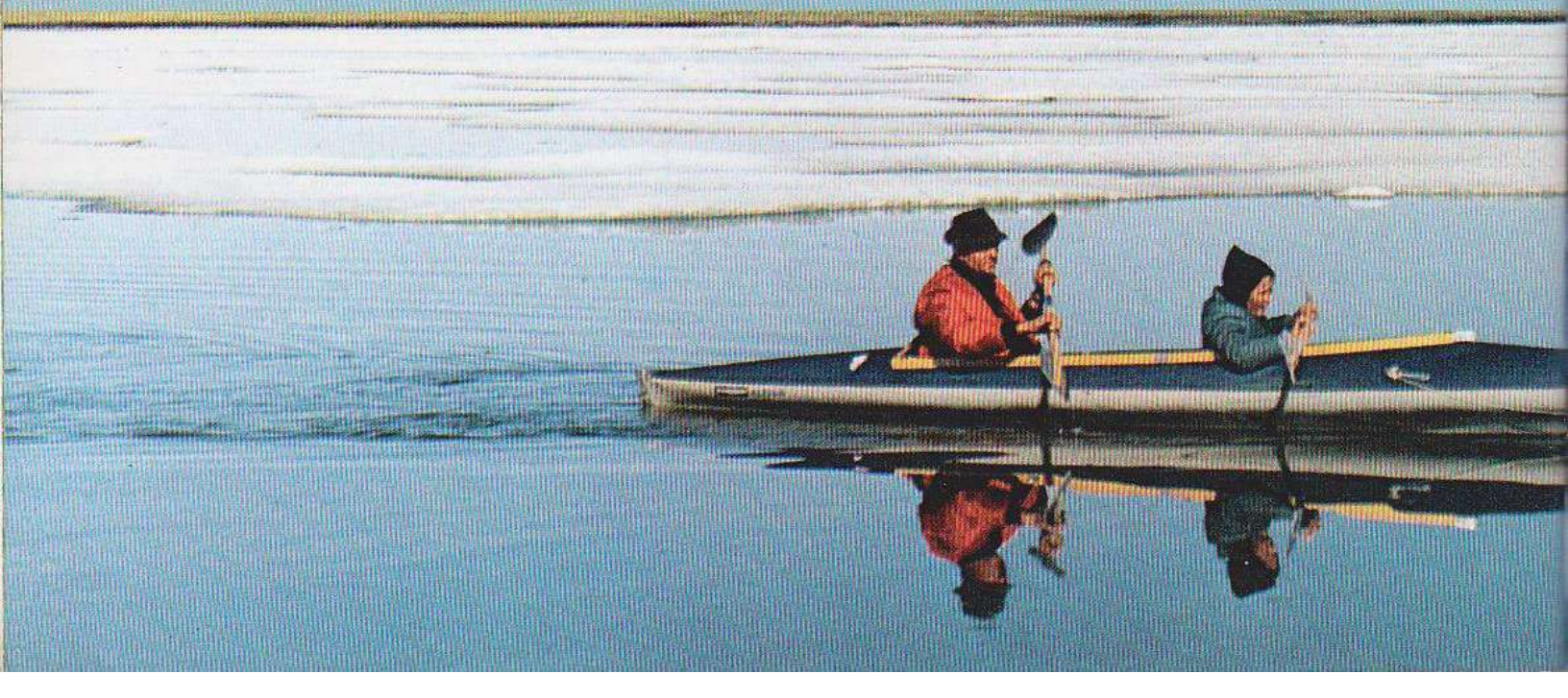
On they came. There were big bulls with large branching antlers and little calves following their mothers, who had smaller antlers. Sometimes they would stop to graze on lichens and grasses, then dash forward. I could hear them coughing and grunting, their hoofs clicking. Sometimes several bulls would fight, and I could hear their antlers crashing together.

We sat down and kept very still so we wouldn't frighten them. Luckily caribou are peaceful animals, because there were no trees for us to climb if we needed to escape. One time we stood up quickly, and they stampeded just like a herd of cattle. Hundreds ran in every direction, trying to get away from us. Pretty soon they drifted together again, but they always kept moving in one direction. They reminded me of the big buffalo herds of the old West that I had read about.

Dad and I tried to count them, but there were just too many. Dad guessed there were between 20,000 and 40,000 caribou in the herd. They were migrating south from their summer feeding grounds to spend the winter in the forests. They had migrated north in the spring, and their calves had been born on the treeless tundra along the Arctic Coast.

Finally, the last caribou drifted past and out of sight. As we hiked back to our camp, we could see for miles in every direction. North of us was nothing but ice and snow. The North Pole was out there somewhere. Behind our camp was the flat tundra, covered with grasses, sedges, mosses, lichens and flowers, but no trees. From our camp on the shore we could see the icepack. A long gravel reef kept the ice away from shore. Inside the reef were shallow lagoons where we paddled our kayak. Even though it was July, it was awfully cold. I wore my goose down jacket all the time. Sometimes I got out of the kayak and ran along the gravel reef to keep warm.

During the Arctic summer the sun doesn't set, so we could explore all night. One night we forgot to go to bed until 3 a.m.



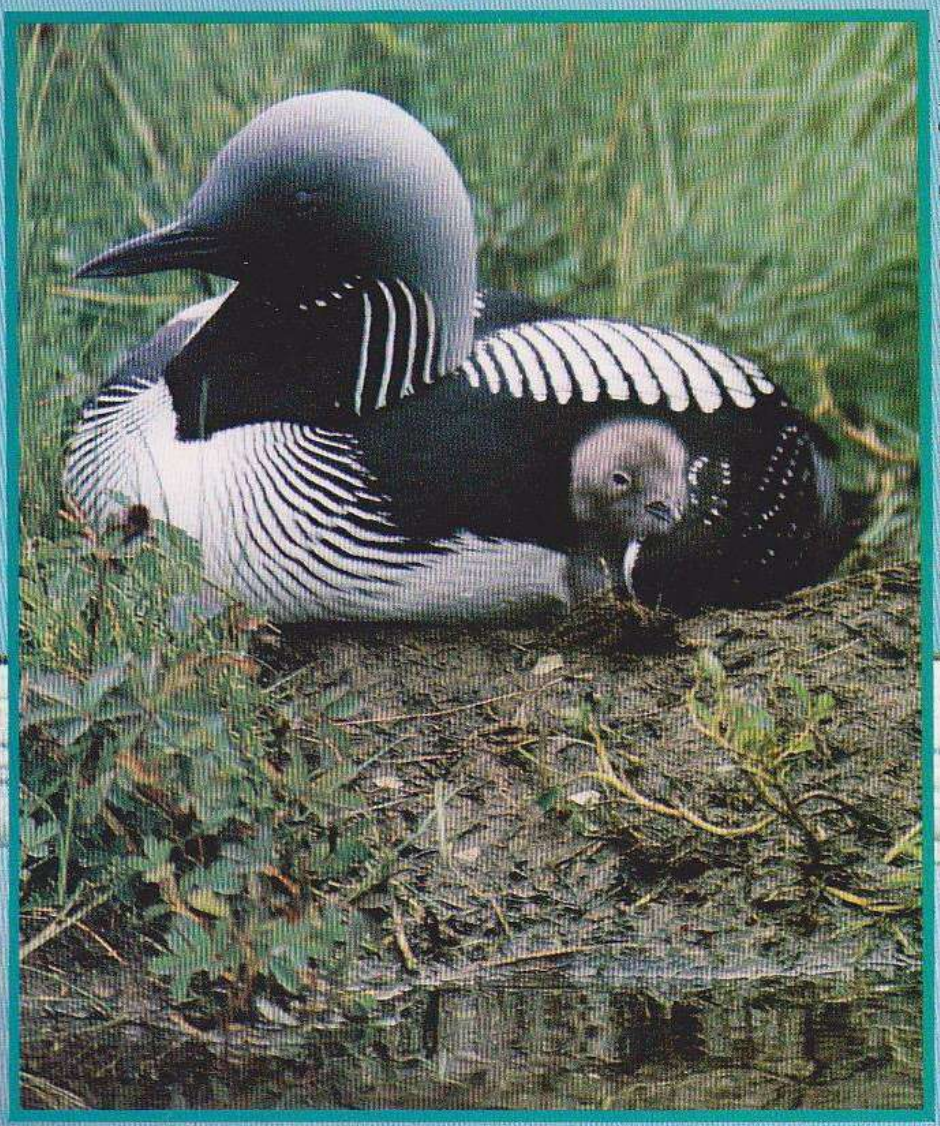
The tundra is a fascinating place. Many kinds of wild flowers bloom there, but poppies and forget-me-nots are the most common. Lemmings—mice of the tundra—scurry along little trails and tunnels. Several times we saw an arctic fox catch a lemming.

The tundra was alive with different kinds of birds—phalaropes, gulls, sandpipers, jaegers, plovers and ducks. I found the nests of eider ducks, whistling swans and arctic loons. One night we heard a loon's wild, piercing call as it echoed over the icepack and faded away. We also heard hundreds of old squaw ducks gabbling as they sat on the icepack.

One day we were paddling our kayak when Dad whispered, "Look, Eric!" He pointed at a big black wolf trotting along the beach toward us. I didn't move a muscle—even when it looked me right in the eye. When the wolf saw us he whirled and ran. Dad says wolves are a symbol of the true wilderness, for they are never found near civilization. We often heard them howl at night and saw their tracks on the beach, but it was a special treat to see one so close.

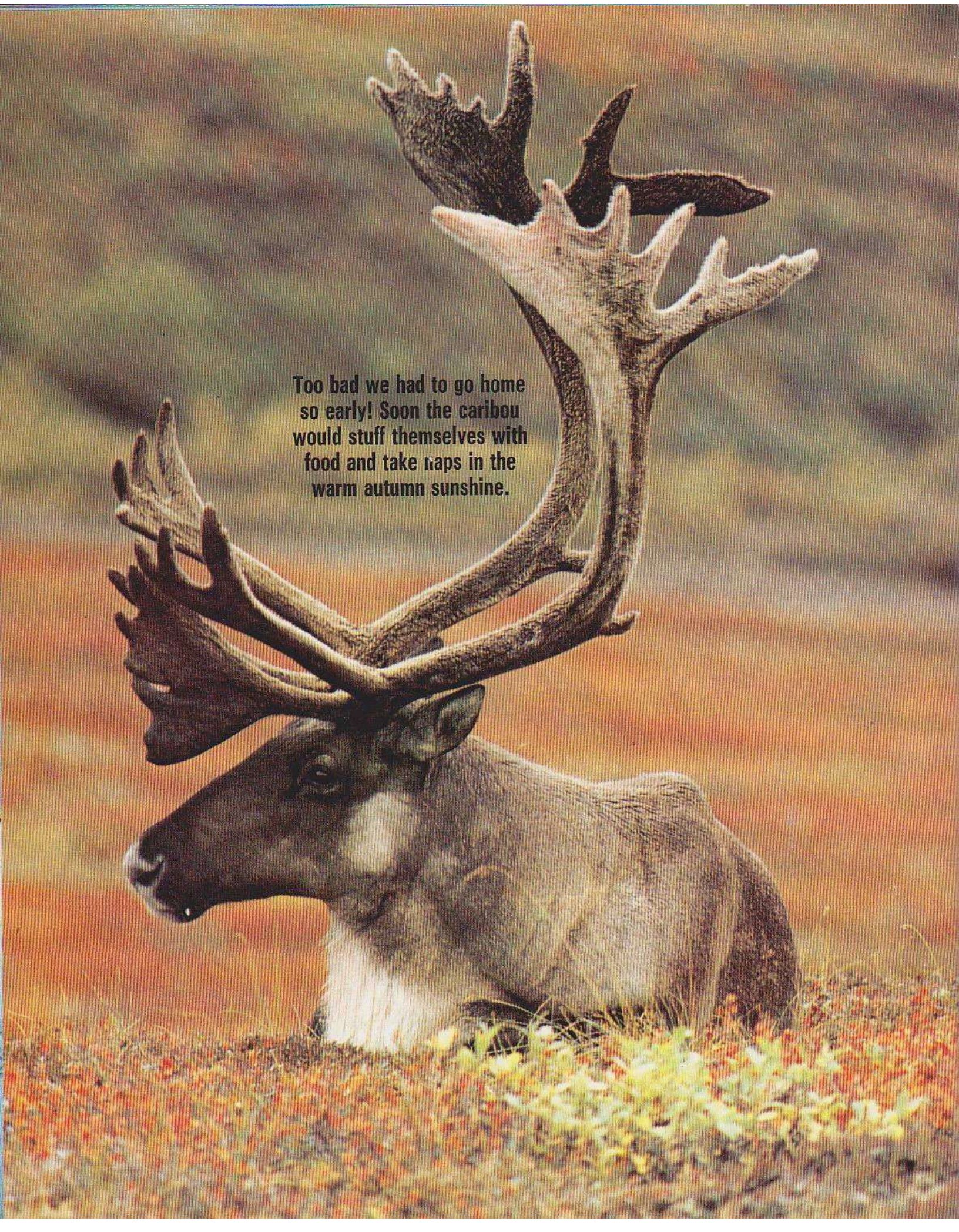
We paddled our kayak along the coast for over a week, watching the wildlife and camping when we got tired. Finally we got on a plane to fly back to Anchorage. As we flew over the tundra I looked down and saw something that looked like a swarm of tiny ants moving south. I'm sure they were our caribou.

*The End*



**A baby arctic loon peeked at us from beneath its mother's wing as we paddled by in our kayak.**

Photos by Will Troyer, Jen & Des Bartlett/Bruce Coleman Inc.


Too bad we had to go home so early! Soon the caribou would stuff themselves with food and take naps in the warm autumn sunshine.

## CRICKET IN THE CORNER

—Lenore McLaughlin Link

I have
A cricket friend
As helpful as can be.
When I forget to sing, he sings
For me.

Drawings by Linda Gist

## THE WORM

—Siv Cedering Fox

inches across
the green, green leaf,
Should I squash him?

eating a hole in the cabbage
head,
Should I crush him?

moving his many legs across
a branch,
Should I push him?

slowly wiggling down
the walk,
Should I step on him?
He could become a butterfly

and I could catch him.
He could have orange and black and golden
wings,
and I could watch him.

He could feed a hungry robin
if I leave him
inching,
inching.

## MUSHROOM BALLET

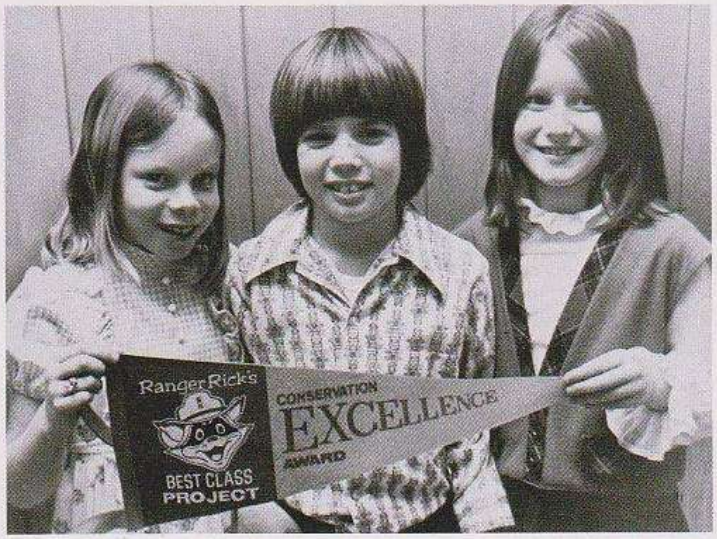
—Julie Becker

Let's crawl in under the birch log,
And lie on the pine needle grounds.
Close our eyes and listen
To forest symphony sounds.
I think I hear them coming
As the instruments start to play.
It's the first performance
In the woods today
Of the New Hampshire White Mountain
Mushroom Ballet.

They flutter their gills so gently
While dancing on delicate limbs,
And wave their ivory skirts
According to musical whims.
They nod their soft white heads
As they arch their stems and sway.
A command performance
In the woods today
Of the New Hampshire White Mountain
Mushroom Ballet.

Photo by Steve Preston

# Nature Club News



Photos by Sue Schweiger/Today's Spirit

Two prize-winning Ranger Rick Clubs—one in Southampton, Pennsylvania, and another in Detroit, Michigan—used a lot of imagination to raise money to help wildlife. Do the stories of what they did give your club any ideas?

## T-SHIRTS & LITTER CANS

Edwin Walter's Class Club, "Mr. Walter's Helping Hands" of Southampton, studied ecology this year and they came up with some great ideas for decorating trash cans. The hungry lion shown here is one of them.

For other decorations they chose a tree with a squirrel in it—"Help Us Store Litter," and a shoe—"Kick The Litter Habit."

We especially liked the Helping Hands' slogan, which was printed on T-shirts, "My Life Depends on All My Friends." That really says it, doesn't it? They sold the T-shirts to fellow students. Eventually they sent a check for $70 to the National Wildlife Federation to help wildlife.

Mr. Walter tells us that besides the money they raised, the trash cans really worked and his school was looking much, much cleaner. Hard work really paid off for these Rangers!

## POPCORN & PUPPETS

In Detroit, Jimmy Bellingham and Mike O'Donnell had a quite different idea for helping wildlife. They organized five different puppet shows and put them on in their neighborhood!

When they had built and painted their sets and made the puppets, they passed out announcements of the shows to many of their friends. The announcements explained how the admission money was to be used. The boys also attached membership blanks for Ranger Rick's Nature Club. They raised more than their goal.

Before the play began, Mike and Jimmy also sold lemonade, popcorn and (with their mothers' help) homemade cupcakes. Then after each show they had a game session for which a small fee was charged and small prizes given.

The boys worked hard and had a lot of fun and the National Wildlife Federation had another donation to help preserve wildlife!

We're really proud of what these club members accomplished. A big HATS-OFF salute to all of them! *The End*

## ANSWERS TO OLLIE OTTER'S BIRD GAMES on page 16:

Blue Jay 4
Brown Thrasher 5
Black & White Warbler 2
Rose-Breasted Grosbeak 3
Black-Throated Blue Warbler 6
Yellow-Breasted Chat 7
Scarlet Tanager 1

1. Please hand me the wrench.
2. Did you hear that rooster crow?
3. Nancy can warble right at the top of the scale.
4. Ruth rushed to the store.
5. Do you think they will rob in the night?
6. Put the card in all the way.
7. Jack got rave notices for his trumpet solo.
8. Put the bowl in the cupboard.

THE SHOW▲

THE AUDIENCE▼

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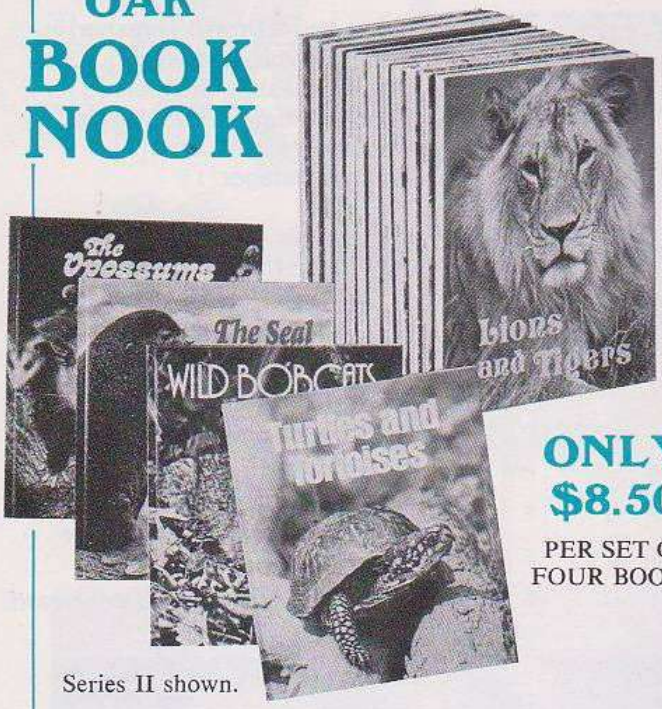


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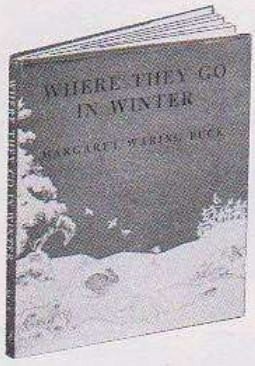


**WHERE THEY GO IN WINTER** *Margaret Waring Buck.* Many birds fly south in winter, but what about bunnies or butterflies? And where do turtles go? Children will love solving the mystery of what happens to their bird and animal friends when winter's cold sets in. The lovely black and white drawings are likelike in every detail. 61 pages, 8" x 10", ages 9-14.

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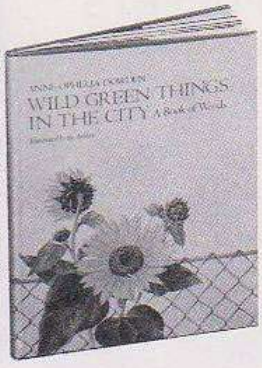


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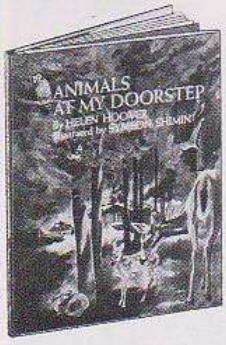


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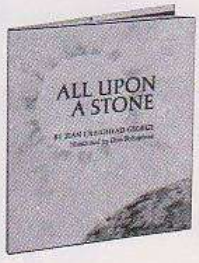


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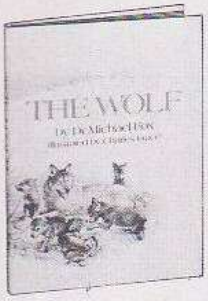


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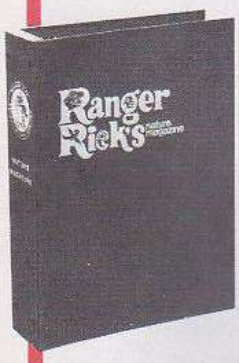


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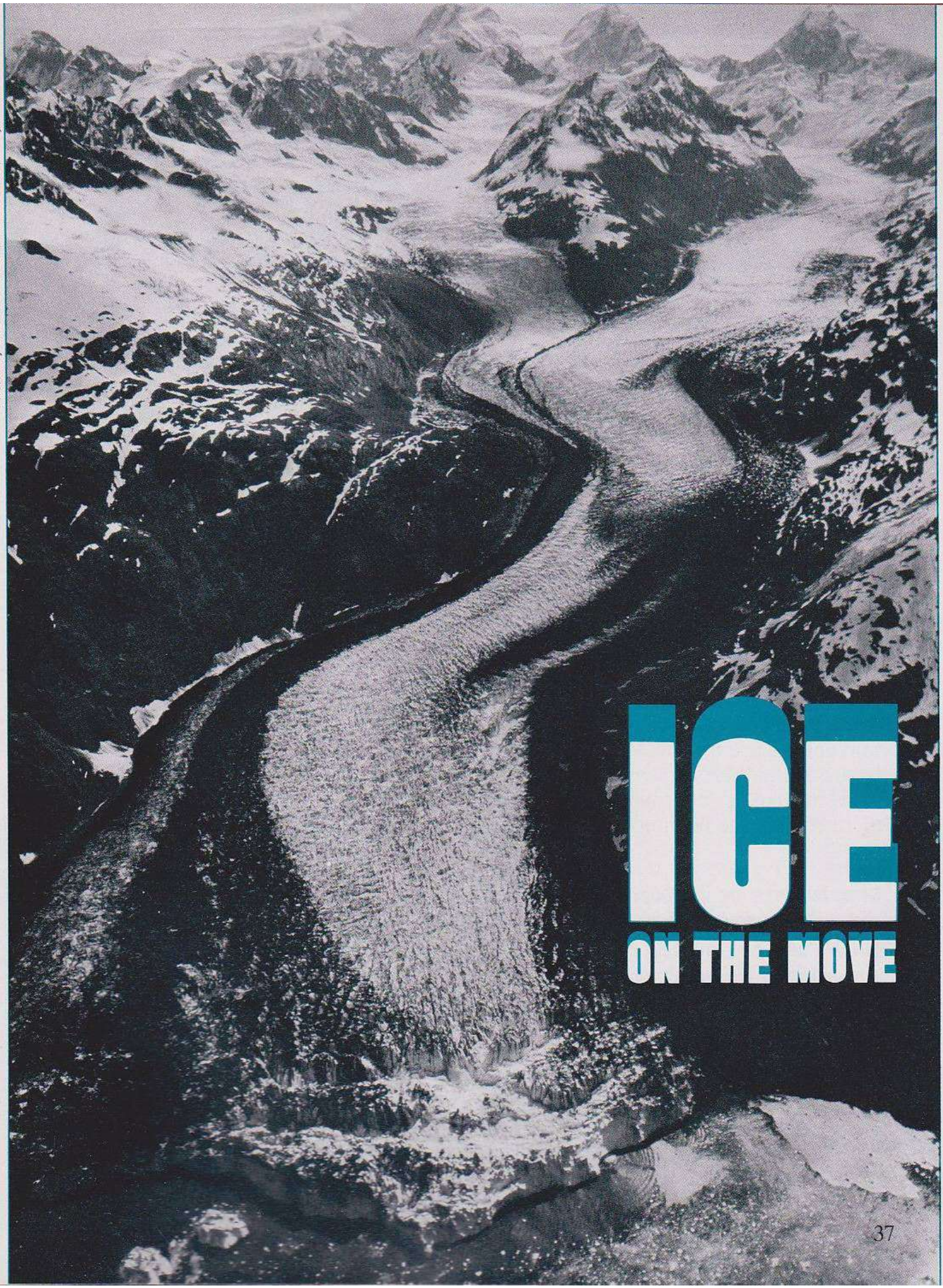


Photos by Steven C. Wilson; Thase Daniel; Manya Wik

# ICE
## ON THE MOVE

# GLACIERS

by Ann Hudson Downs

Pick up a handful of snow and squeeze it with your fingers. In a short time you will be holding a ball of ice.

Your fingers squeezed and pressed the snowflakes together. This is something like the way glaciers (GLAY-shurs) are formed.

In the cold polar regions and in many of the world's highest mountain areas, the snow melts very little. Over the years it piles up, little by little, until in some places it is more than 3 kilometers (about 2 miles) deep!

The weight of all this snow presses down on the lower layers of snow and packs them together. These layers become a huge sheet of solid ice, or a glacier. As the glacier gets thicker and heavier, its weight makes it start to slide —a few centimeters to a few meters a day. As it moves along, it scrapes up and carries with it tons of soil and rocks.

There are thousands of glaciers in the world today. Those that form in mountain valleys are narrow and can be more than 80 kilometers (50 miles) long. They slide down the mountain slopes like a giant river of ice flowing toward the sea.

Other glaciers are the size of continents. One such colossal mass of ice covers Antarctica. This giant glacier, called an *ice cap*, covers an area larger than the United States!

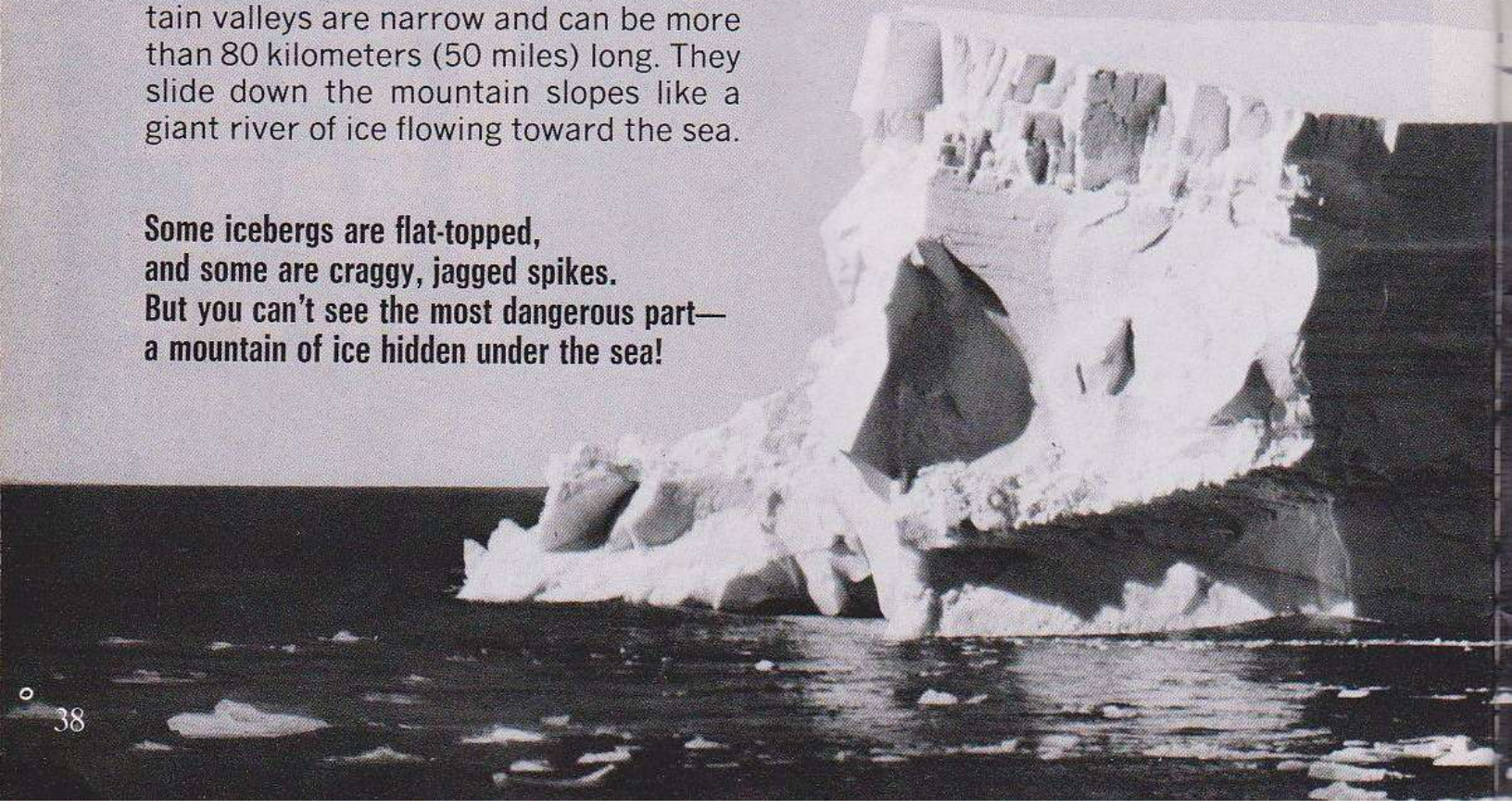
Some glaciers come to an end as they move down from the cold mountaintops. The warmer temperatures melt the ice and form lakes and rivers.

Other glaciers don't melt. They slide all the way to the ocean, where powerful waves lash out at the intruding giants. Mountainous chunks, called icebergs, break free and crash into the sea with a thundering noise.

# ICEBERGS

Just like the snowflakes they came from, no two icebergs are alike. Some are no more than 9 to 12 meters (30 to 40 feet) across. Sailors call these "growlers" because of the

**Some icebergs are flat-topped,**
**and some are craggy, jagged spikes.**
**But you can't see the most dangerous part—**
**a mountain of ice hidden under the sea!**



growling noises they make when breaking up in warm waters. Others may be many kilometers wide and weigh millions of tons. One record-breaking iceberg stood almost 170 meters (about 550 feet) above the water. That is nearly as high as the Washington Monument! Yet this is just a small part of the whole iceberg. Only from 1/8th to 1/10th of the iceberg sticks out of the water. Most of the berg's huge body is hidden as it floats beneath the sea!

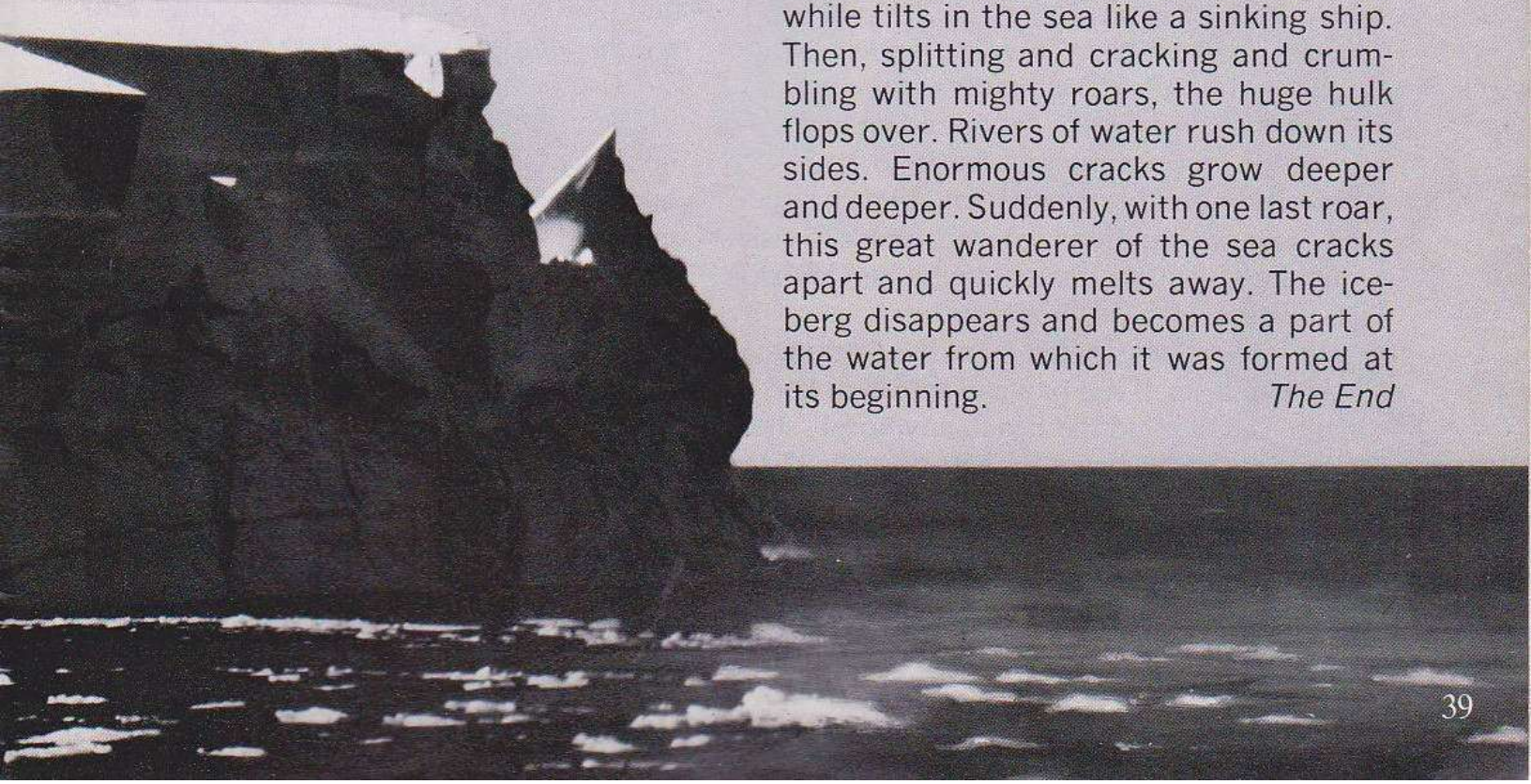
A big, jagged iceberg looks like a beautiful floating castle—glittering white and dazzling in the sunlight. Occasionally a block of pure blue ice shows through the sides. Huge holes and caves (formed by the battering force of giant waves) are sometimes shaded with pale greens, bright blues and deep purples.

At dawn and again at sunset, the iceberg's colors can change to golds and shades of rose. At night the berg glows with a strange white light.

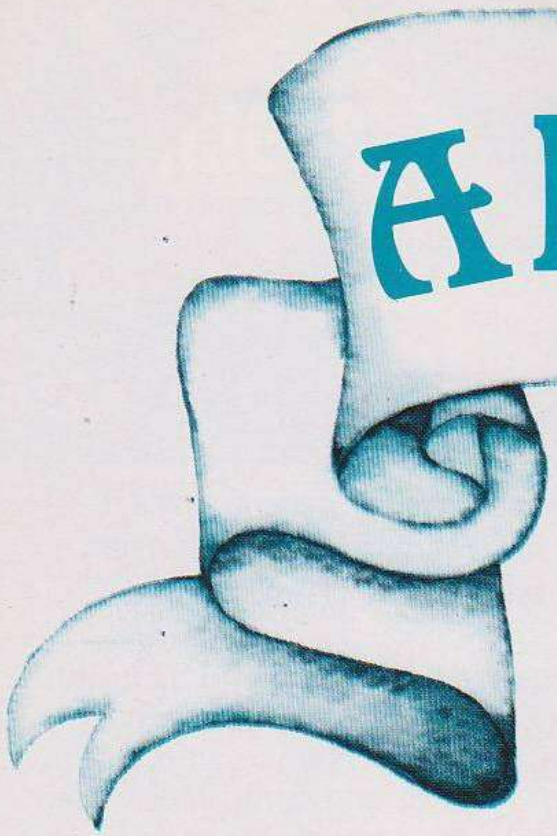
**If you licked a chunk of iceberg, would it be salty? No. A berg is frozen fresh water. It's like licking a giant snowball.**

Icebergs are fascinating and beautiful, but they can also be very dangerous. In 1912, the British passenger ship *Titanic* struck an iceberg and sank. More than 1500 people drowned. Since then an International Ice Patrol has watched for icebergs in the danger zones of the North Atlantic shipping lanes.

The death of an iceberg is as spectacular as its birth. When it reaches warm waters, it begins to melt rapidly. Sometimes it becomes top-heavy and for a while tilts in the sea like a sinking ship. Then, splitting and cracking and crumbling with mighty roars, the huge hulk flops over. Rivers of water rush down its sides. Enormous cracks grow deeper and deeper. Suddenly, with one last roar, this great wanderer of the sea cracks apart and quickly melts away. The iceberg disappears and becomes a part of the water from which it was formed at its beginning. *The End*



# A Place for the



## PART I

by Oliver A. Houck

"A girl to see me, with a small red pail?" asked King Oliver.

The old king sat by the open window in his favorite purple bathrobe. The sun poured over him like warm water and made gold splashes on the gray stone floor.

"Well, by all means, let her come in."

At the king's command the page stood proudly, raised his trumpet and blew his special song for children who were about to visit the king. It sounded very much like "My Dog Has Fleas."

Into the room walked a girl in a bathing suit with a small red pail and shovel in her hand. "I can't find the beach anymore!" she said sadly to the page, for with his splendid cap and trumpet he looked like the most important person in the room.

"Tell *him*," whispered the page, pointing to the king.

The king spoke in a voice as friendly as a warm muffin. "You can't find the beach? Well, now, that should be easy to fix," he said, turning to his advisors.

"All of your children are having a hard time finding the beach nowadays, King," said the eldest advisor.

The small girl nodded her head. "Grownups keep taking it," she said.

The king frowned royally at his advisors. "Well, why don't you speak to the grownups?" he asked.

The advisors looked at one another and then at the king.

"We have," said one.

"The grownups say that they own the beach and they can do whatever they want," said another.

"So they have put up a big fence. . . ."

Just then there was a knock on the stone doorway. They all looked up to see a boy in hiking boots. On his back he carried a canteen and a knapsack full of candy bars.

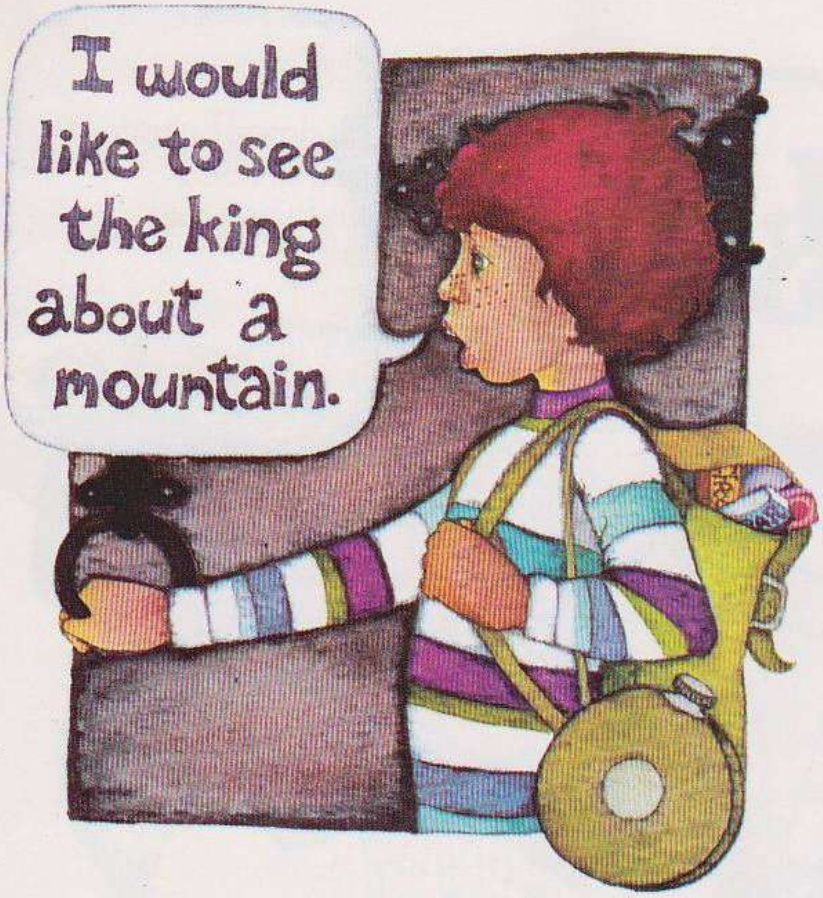
"I would like to see the king about a mountain," he said.

The green and yellow page jumped to his feet and played "My Dog Has Fleas." The boy was very impressed and he spoke in a loud, brave voice. "Mr. King, I was going on a hike to the Mountain, but they changed it."

"Well, that should be easy to fix," said the king in his low, kind voice, and he turned to his advisors.

*Please turn the page*

Children!
I can't find the beach anymore!




"Well?" he asked.

Finally an advisor spoke. "The grownups bought the Mountain."

"And they cut down all the trees," added a second. "And they . . ."

"Why didn't you stop them?" interrupted the king.

The boy looked at the advisors.

"They *own* the Mountain," said the advisors.

King Oliver sighed. "Yes," he said, looking at the knapsack, "and it is a free country for grownups, but I certainly want some of the trees left for the children."

*"Beep, Beep! Ooga, Ooga!"* At that very moment two bicycle horns sounded in the hallway and into the room rode two small people on bikes. "We have to see the king! We have to see the king!" they said, stopping their bikes in front of the green and yellow page.

"We live in the city," said the girl.

"And the grownups just knocked down our houses," said the boy.

King Oliver cleared his throat. "Knocked them down, you say?" he asked softly, looking wonderingly at his advisors.

"With a big machine!" said the girl, her arms spread wide to show just how big the machine was.

There was silence in the royal chamber. The king looked worried. He leaned over and put his hand on the shoulder of his eldest advisor. "Do you know about these grownups with a machine?" he asked.

The eldest advisor nodded. "Yes," he said. "We have all seen it."

"It is a highway machine, paving the city," said one advisor.

"It is a ditching machine, killing the streams and the great marshes," said another.

"It is a strip-mining machine," said a third advisor, "and when it is through, the land looks as dead as the moon."

The king stood up in his old purple bathrobe and walked around the room. "But can't you stop this machine?" he asked.

The eldest advisor spoke up. "It is a very hard thing to do, to stop a big machine," he said. "Grownups own them, and they can do what they want."

The king rubbed his old thin arms. He felt chilly and sad. He stared out the window and said softly to himself, "Fencing the beach, cutting the mountains, machines in the city and the land like the moon." He turned to the children, for they were all watching him now, and asked, "Is that what you want?" The children shook their heads.

"Well, there must be a way for people to save these things—beaches, and mountains, and places where machines cannot go." The king started talking to himself. "There must be a place, a country somewhere, where people plan for their children."

The room was silent. Everyone was trying to think of a country where people planned things for their children. The sun moved in

the sky, but no one had spoken. Then from a corner of the room, a voice said, "I have heard of a country like that."

All eyes turned. It was the green and yellow page speaking. "I have a book about it. The country is called The United States of America, but . . . ," he looked at the floor, ". . . it is very far away."

"The United States of America," said the king. "That is a fine-sounding name, but how can I find out about this country?"

The king's advisors all looked at one another and shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders. Then the page stepped forward, holding a heavy book, its title in large gold letters, *The United States of America, What It Is Like In.*

"Here is my book, Your Majesty," said the page. "I use it to sit on, because my chair is too low."

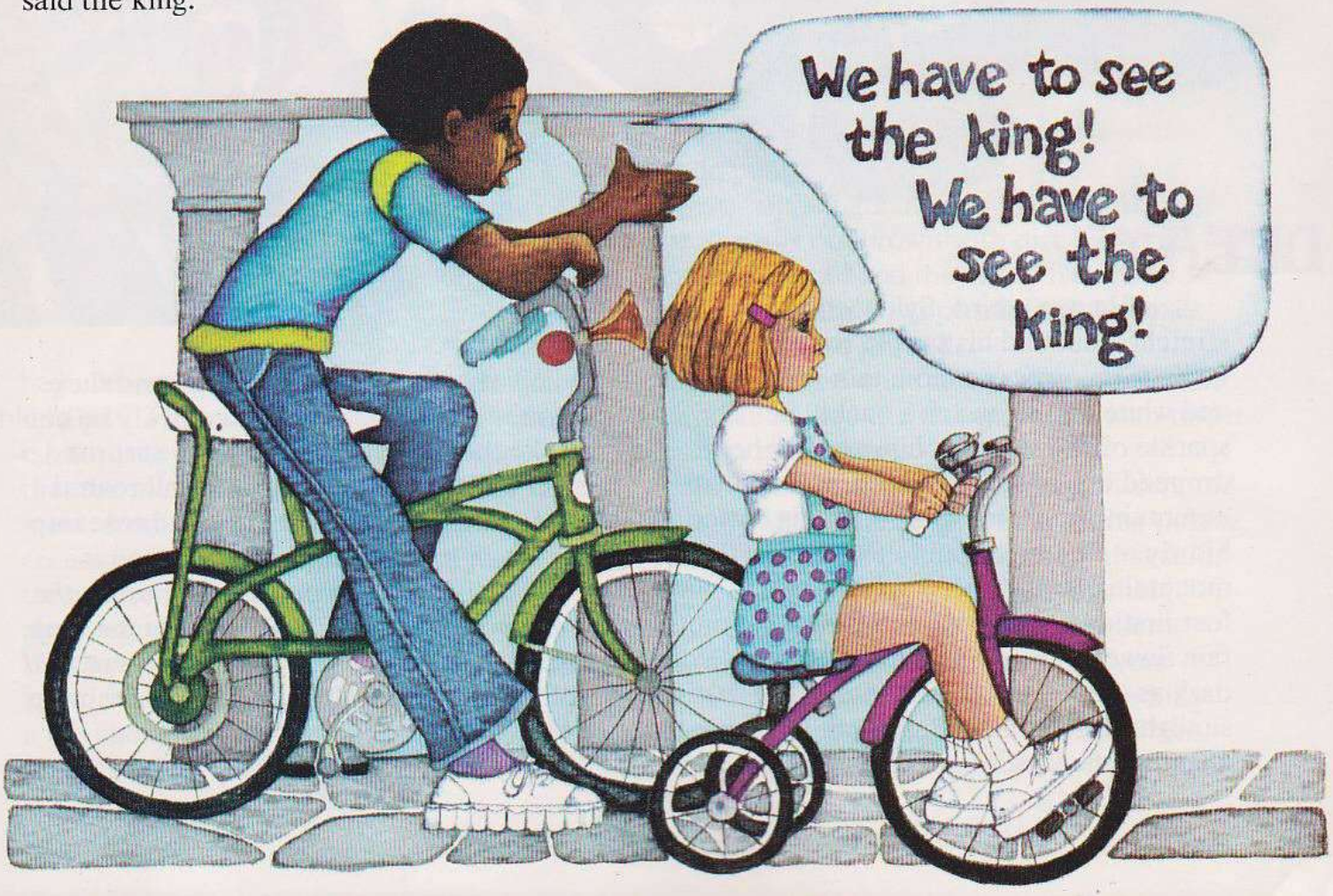
"Thank you, page," said the king.

He walked to his chair and sat down. "Little people," he said to the children standing by the door, "I will read about this United States of America and I will learn how those people plan their land for their children."

The green and yellow page led the children out of the room, with the red pail, the knapsack and the bicycles, and the trumpet playing "My Dog Has Fleas." The king settled in his chair with the book on his lap and the warm sun baking his old bones.

*Now let me see,* he thought, opening the book, *here are the mountains . . . . and there is a beach . . . . and that must be a city where people live.* The king yawned royally. "I wish I weren't so sleepy." The room was as quiet as threads and socks and the soft *"puff, puff"* of a radiator. Slowly the king's head nodded sideways, the heavy book settled in his lap and he felt himself floating, floating up a sunbeam and out of the castle window.

*Please turn the page*



# DREAM 1

He was a bird, flying with his arms stretched out and his purple robe flapping behind. Below was a mountain range, green and white and strong as a backbone. The sparkle of snow caught his eye, and he dropped down like a leaf and settled on a mountain stream no wider than his bottom. Slowly at first he began to float down the mountainside and then, *zip,* he was rushing feet first over the rocks and past the mountain flowers. *Whoosh,* he rode into pine woods dark as a tunnel and then back out into the sunlight faster and wilder, silver fish racing ahead of the king's bare toes and birds of the valley wheeling and singing like mad flutes overhead. He passed deer so quickly he could stroke their noses, and a bear so surprised he could tickle its ear. A waterfall roared ahead and he spread his arms and rose into the sky, a long, purple bird.

*What a beautiful country! It must be the United States of America,* thought the king. *How wise they have been to save these wild places.* He soared up over the mountaintop, drifting with his eyes closed, sleeping.

The king awoke with lights on his face,

huge searchlights sweeping the sky in broad daylight. They were coming from the mountaintop and when he circled lower he saw that the mountain was covered with pavement, fresh and dripping like a black ice cream cone. The streams were in gutters, the trees were gone, and in their place stood signs saying "Free Parking." In the middle of the pavement, where the mountaintop had been, was a flat, square building wrapped in a big banner that read: "Valley View Shopping Center, Grand Opening."

As the king landed, a man in a red and white suit rushed out of the shopping center. "Welcome to Valley View," said the man, shaking the king's arm with both hands. "Great place to shop, isn't it?"

The king looked around. Ripples of heat rose from the pavement and smelled like hot tar.

"Wasn't there a snowbank here, and a little stream . . ." the king began.

"Nature freak, eh?" smiled the man. "Me too." He thumped his red and white shirt. "See here," he said, putting his arm around the old king's shoulders. "You know why I call this place Valley View?" He raised his eyebrows, waiting for the king to answer.

"Step this way!" he said, pulling the king with him to the edge of the parking lot. "Now close your eyes," said the red and white man happily. The king waited for a signal to open his eyes. He waited and waited. The king heard a deep groan. He opened his eyes and saw that his companion was turning blue and then pale green. "What are they doing to my Valley View?" the man gasped.

The king looked below. Trees were burning in piles. Machines, buzzing like metal insects, ripped great holes in the earth, and the streams ran brown with dirt. Electric power lines crossed the valley like giant spider webs and rows of small white boxes dotted the bare ground.

"Let's go see what they're doing," said the king. He tucked the red and white man under his arm and flew into the valley.

At the head of the valley was a trailer, and in front of the trailer sat a man selling tickets. Above the ticket booth was a sign that said, "Mountain View Acres, Grand Opening."

"Step right up!" said the ticket seller, chewing on a large cigar, "and buy your Vacation Paradise!" He looked at the king and the red and white man in front of him. "You two together?" he asked doubtfully.

*Please turn the page*

They nodded.

The man looked carefully at his cigar. "You're lucky," he said. "We got two cabins left with a View-of-the-Mountain. Great View-of-the-Mountain." He took a deep puff on his cigar and sighed. "Love that mountain air!" he said.

The red and white man stepped forward. "Have you seen the Mountain lately?" he asked with an evil grin.

"Saw it only this morning," said the man behind his cigar.

"Well, take a look at the Mountain now!" the red and white man said.

"Sure," said the cigar man hastily, "anything you say." He blew the cigar smoke away from his eyes. There it stood, black and bare, a mountain of pavement with a store on top.

"Holy Cow!" cried the cigar man, dropping his cigar. "You've ruined my Mountain!"

"Well, you ruined my Valley!" yelled the red and white man.

"Now no one will buy my homes for a View-of-the-Mountain," the cigar man said, shaking his head.

"Well, no one will come to look at my Valley View," the red and white man said, shaking his fist.

"Why didn't you tell me your *plans*?" shouted the cigar man.

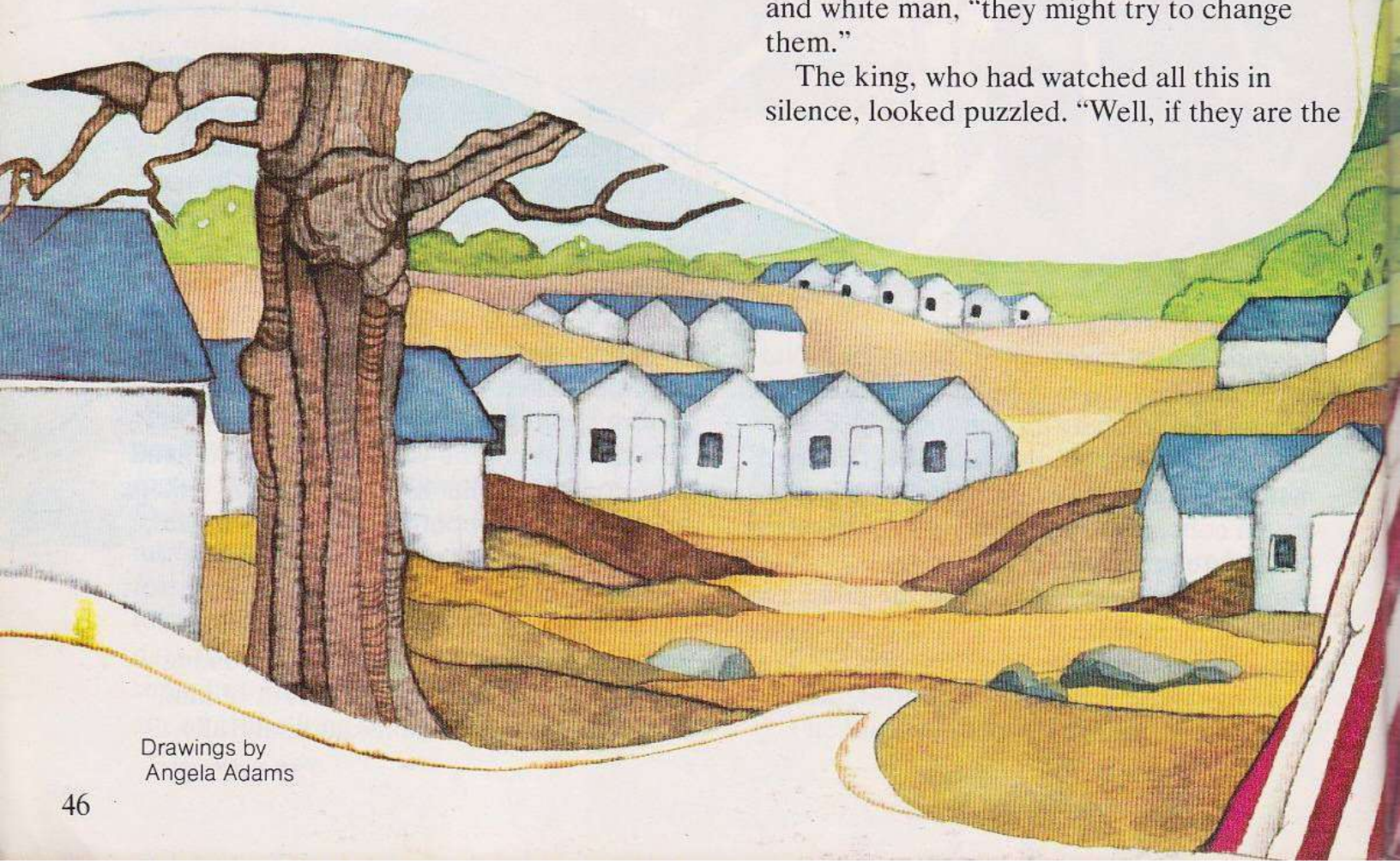
"Why didn't you tell me *your* plans?" shouted the red and white man.

The two men stood toe to toe ready to fight, when from the valley and the mountain came a chorus of voices saying, "Why didn't you tell *us* your plans?" They were the voices of people, all the people who have to live where houses are built and have to shop where shopping centers are built, all the people of the country. The two men stood still, listening to the echo.

"Tell *them*?" said the cigar man, as if it were a joke.

"If we tell people our plans," said the red and white man, "they might try to change them."

The king, who had watched all this in silence, looked puzzled. "Well, if they are the



Drawings by
Angela Adams

people who live here, and shop here, shouldn't they have something to say about . . ."

"This is a free country," said the cigar man, blowing great smoke from a new cigar.

The king shook his head, still confused. "But what about the other free things, the air, the water . . ."

The two men looked at each other in amazement. The king spoke more loudly, trying to make them understand.

"What about the deer, the birds, the green trees and flowers, the children who will grow up and live their lives here? Who will see to it that they have these things?"

"Look, mister . . .," said the cigar man, stepping forward.

"We don't like people asking questions like that," said the red and white man.

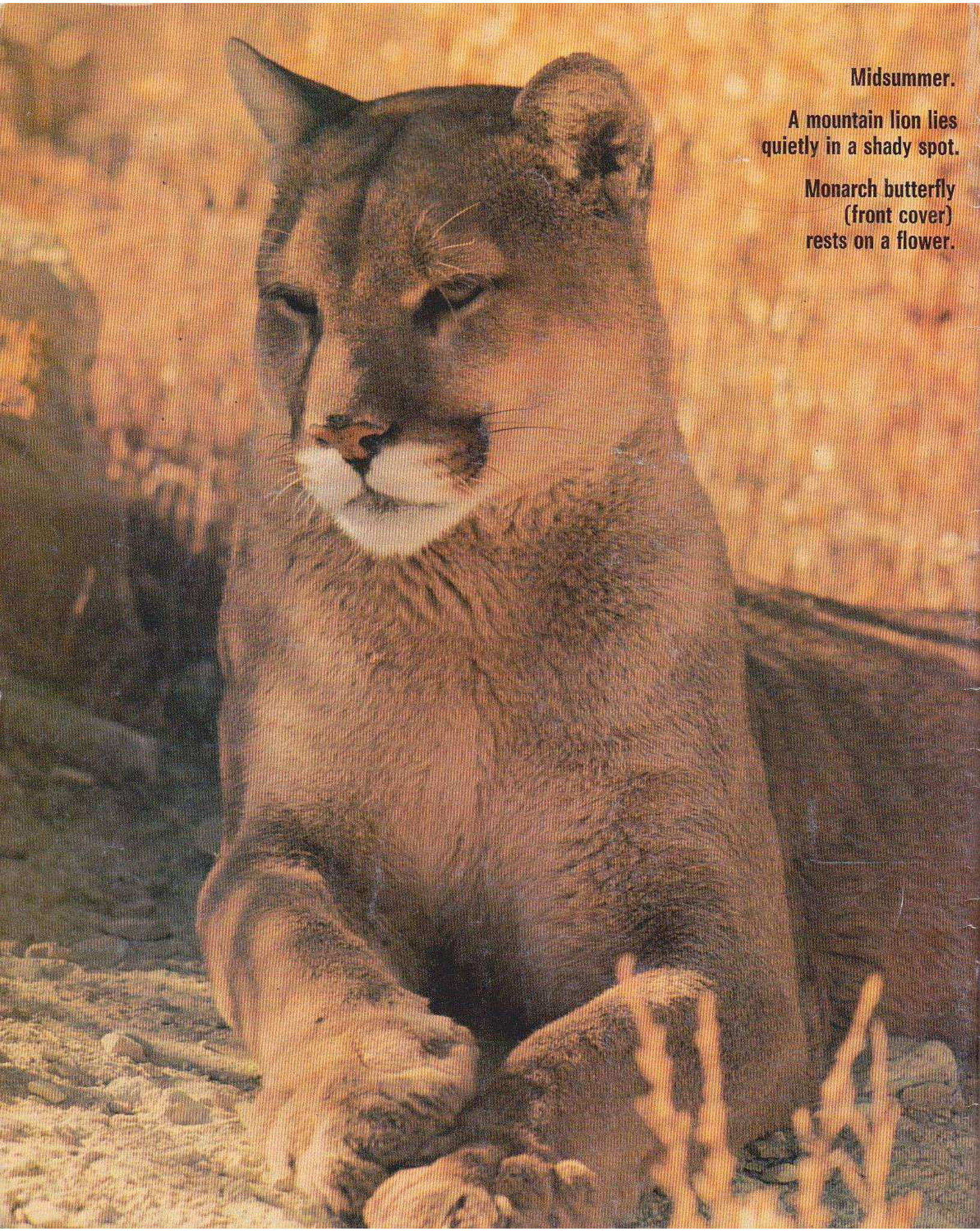
Their faces grew larger and larger.

"Get out," said the first face.

"Git!" said the second.

The king lifted his arms and suddenly he was flying again, above the valley, the mountain and the sound of people calling, floating toward the ocean and a warm, sandy beach.

*Rangers: Will King Oliver find the answer to how to save mountains and beaches and places to live for all the children in his kingdom? Be sure to read* A Place for the Children—Part 2 *in the October 1975 issue.*



Midsummer.

A mountain lion lies quietly in a shady spot.

Monarch butterfly (front cover) rests on a flower.